

PLAYSTATION 3  
PS Vita | PSN | PSP

DIGITAL  
EDITION

METAL GEAR: GROUND ZEROES

# PLAY



ISSUE NO 224  
UBI'S AMERICAN DREAM

## DEFINITIVE VERDICT

- ▲ NEXT GEN COMES EARLY
- ▲ WHY IT'S BEST ON PLAYSTATION
- ▲ LIBERATION: VITA'S SECRET WEAPON



## GAME OF THE YEAR SHOCKER?

Tomorrow's classics revealed  
– 2012's best PS3 titles rated

# ASSASSIN'S CREED III

## INSOMNIAC STRIKES BACK

Resistance dev kills  
Overstrike to create Fuse

## 18+ REVIEWS

XCOM: ENEMY UNKNOWN DISHONORED  
ONE PIECE: PIRATE WARRIORS NBA 2K13  
MADAGASCAR 3 PORT ROYALE 3

EXCLUSIVE GUIDES TO:  
SOUTH PARK REMEMBER ME PUPPETEER  
FAR CRY 3 EPIC MICKEY 2 GRID 2 DMC



## DEAD SPACE 3 UNDER FIRE

Visceral tackles our  
tough questions

**LBP**  
WHY IT HAS TO  
CHANGE

## FINAL FANTASY SPECIAL

Square Enix shares amazing series secrets





HEIGHTS OF PERIL.  
DEPTHS OF DARKNESS.  
THE SAGA CONTINUES...

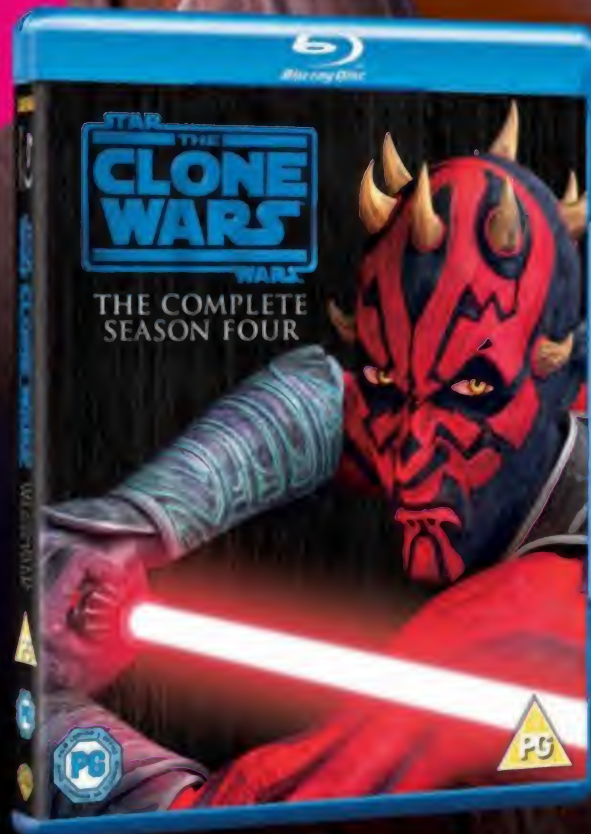


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# 演劇端末 PlayStation 3 PSN PSVita PSP Welcome **PLAY**

The UK's best independent PlayStation magazine

## 06 DEFINITIVE VERDICT ASSASSIN'S CREED III

The truth behind Ubisoft's reinvention of the flagship series

Comeback issue



**P**ersonally, I've never been into the whole yearly sequel thing, but I admire just how

far *Assassin's Creed* has come since its disappointing first entry five years ago. *Assassin's Creed III* is the logical conclusion of the ideas debuted in 2007's fancy £50 tech demo (it wasn't all that). It represents the peak of what the PS3 was built to achieve in terms of technical ambition – as well as making murder look ruddy realistic. Along with *Liberation* on the Vita, this year PlayStation owners will be treated to the best *Assassin's Creed* experience possible across all platforms, and we explore that in this issue.

*Final Fantasy*, on the other hand, is a PlayStation series at a crossroads. This issue we chat to Square Enix about how the beloved JRPG will evolve in future. Along with an in-depth interview about *Dead Space 3*, we also see two excellent releases battle for game of the year: *XCOM* and *Dishonored*.

Oh, and if you're wondering where Ryan is, I had him killed, wrapped in a rug and chucked in the sea (not really). You might remember me from a few years ago – I started on **Play** way back in 2007, and now I've come back to finish the fight (oops, wrong magazine!). Check out the DVD for loads of cool stuff as we run up to a thrilling climax to 2012 on PS3. Enjoy the issue.

S. Kent

Deputy Editor

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### BLACK OPS II TOP TIPS

Get ahead of the game with our *Call of Duty: Black Ops II* multiplayer hints – learn everything you need to know about Treyarch's FPS here.

### REMEMBER ME COMMENTARY

Dontnod popped into the *Play* office, and kindly gave us some exclusive insight on its brand new Capcom-published title.



### BORDERLANDS 2 GAMEPLAY

Find out how bad at Gearbox's shooter we really are in footage from our playthrough. We ramble a little bit over the top.


### PLAYING GT5 WITH US

Check out footage from our recent *Play* Community Night, where we took to the track with you lot to sort the men from the boys.




SEE THE BACK PAGE FOR MORE!



A detailed image of a female Assassin's Creed III character, likely Connor, wearing a blue leather tricorn hat, a dark leather vest over a light-colored shirt, and a red sash. She is holding a knife in her right hand and a tomahawk in her left. The background is a blurred, rocky landscape.

# ASSASSIN'S CREED III

## THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT

 BETWEEN **ASSASSIN'S CREED III** AND **LIBERATION**, UBISOFT'S FRANCHISE IS CHANGING THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT HOW DEVELOPERS ARE APPROACHING BOTH PS3 AND VITA DEVELOPMENT – WE GOT AN EXTENSIVE HANDS-ON WITH BOTH NEAR-FINISHED GAMES, AND SPOKE TO UBISOFT ABOUT HOW ASSASSIN'S CREED WILL CHANGE FOREVER...





From beautiful open land to built-up locales, it's all here.



Naturally, Connor has lots of new ways to kill enemies.

PLAYING IT FEELS LIKE A 10MG INJECTION OF ADRENALINE DIRECTLY INTO THE HEART OF THE SERIES, AN ANSWER TO FANS WHO FELT THE SERIES HAD SAGGED WITH LAST YEAR'S LESS INSPIRED REVELATIONS

**A**ssassin's Creed has come a long way since 2007. From a frustratingly linear and repetitive first edition, to the triumphant narrative arc of the Ezio trilogy, to an overwhelmingly large

open world adventure in this year's overhaul *Assassin's Creed III*, the series has managed to stay relevant in a changing gaming industry, rewarding the loyalty of veterans while roping in millions of new fans. That's quite a feat. With so many layers of history to work with, it's hard to see where (or when) this franchise will end, but with the launch of the dedicated Vita game, *Liberation*, as well as PS3-exclusive DLC for *Assassin's Creed III* itself, it's gratifying to know that Ubisoft is specifically giving PlayStation users the best possible experience.

*ACIII* is essentially a reboot. Playing it feels like a 10mg injection of adrenaline directly into the heart of the series, an answer to fans who felt the series had sagged with last year's less inspired *Revelations*. Ubisoft has built the new AnvilNext engine from scratch, which gives the player more control than ever and makes just about everything in the environment interactive. As a result,

you're presented with an immensely beautiful realisation of a divided North America, with an expansive frontier that contains entire masses of land that you may never cover in your experience with the game. It's almost like you're witnessing the possibilities of what the PlayStation 4 will offer players in terms of scale and detail, but ambitiously brought to life on the PS3.

The protagonist has undergone a makeover to reflect the series' change of setting. We're used to a slender, stealthy Lothario in Ezio but the new protagonist, Connor, is an aggressive mountain of a man who can skin a beaver in ten seconds flat and then, moments later, glide up a tree like a helium balloon. He can power through the large, rural settings of *Assassin's Creed III* at an accelerated pace, while his range of abilities reflects his dual heritage of British and Native American cultures. Connor is a survivor, and learning how to deal with the game's wild backdrop will represent the most fascinating change for series devotees.

To make the game more cinematic, a lot of the controls have been automated. For example, when Connor enters tall grass he'll switch into stealth mode so you don't scare your prey before you've had a chance to stab them. >





Don't forget the multiplayer. That's still a thing, see.

## THE PS VITA OFFERS UBISOFT SO MUCH MORE POTENTIAL IN ITS POWER, WE'RE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE ON THE RECEIVING END OF A SPIN-OFF THAT AIMS TO LIVE UP TO ITS CONSOLE BRETHREN

> Similarly, when he climbs a tree, his movement is so realistic it's as if he really is finding the right grooves to hold onto in order to make the next step; once again, *Assassin's Creed* represents the pinnacle of animation in videogames, and every bound between branches looks exquisitely detailed. We spoke to Steve Masters, lead designer of *ACIII* and asked him how much of a pain in the arse it was to capture this level of detail, and, well, he said that it was a massive pain in the arse, the result of relentless hard work from the team at Ubisoft Montreal.

"Navigating in trees is super easy to just say, but in reality that's years of work from animators, engineers and world designers," Masters says. "It's incredibly organic so being able to adapt the V [shape of a tree], the width of the V and the angle of the V, the way his posing will work – where he'll put his hands and where he'll put his feet – if you just drop the controller he will relax and

lean against it. That's just one shape of a tree, right?"

The size of the world has to account for the fact that the game takes place over an immense thirty-year period, not to mention that the story intersects with one of the most significant events in American history – an unprecedented challenge when you consider that previous *Assassin's Creed* entries took place within a ten-year period. "We're spending thirty years of history before, during and after the [American] Revolution and we've been spending the last three years really rebuilding a lot of our core tech from the ground up to be able to support this new era, the new hero and the new location. We've got everything, it's a massive game."

Masters continues. "One of the most impressive things for me was that we have some battle sequences and a couple of other scenes where you see a couple of thousand people on the screen

at the same time. The magnitude of that is bigger than anything we've been able to do before. It's pretty amazing. It lets us realise these battles that would otherwise have been impossible. Also, when it came to this era and going out into the frontier and an organic terrain, that was something that we didn't really support very well in the past. Continuous slopes changing angle all the time, the ability to free run in the trees, stuff like that."

What's clear is that this isn't just a sequel, this is statement of intent. The evolution between *Assassin's Creed* and its follow-up was represented by an escalating level of detail in world-building, far more activities to fill your time with and embedding you in a historical setting that felt authentic. The transition between *ACII* and *III* is just as extraordinary – a world that is almost bewilderingly big, complete with new approaches to just about every existing facet of *Assassin's Creed*, from transport to storytelling to, of course, the assassinations themselves. It's an extraordinarily involving paradigm that Ubisoft has set up here, and like any open world game that offers a colossal, beautiful environment to exist within, we can envision ourselves spending hours upon hours uncovering every crevice of what this interpretation of America has to offer.

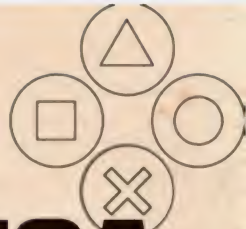
It's familiar to play, yet this new setting changes the way you think about everything that the series has established up until this point. The fact that Ubisoft has invested years in



Liberation should send Vita sales soaring this Christmas.







# THE UNITED STATES OF GAMERICA

ASSASSIN'S CREED III WILL TELL US EVERYTHING WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. BUT WHAT CAN VIDEOGAMES TEACH US ABOUT THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE TERRIFYING SUPERPOWER?

## TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX: VEGAS

LOCATION: LAS VEGAS  
YEAR: 2010

Las Vegas was a hotbed for nasty terrorism in 2010. Unbelievable – but to be expected, since the place is renowned for debauchery and other morally questionable nonsense. At least the US military crushed them with an iron fist.



## RESISTANCE 2

LOCATION: CHICAGO  
YEAR: 1953

The alien race Chimera own Chicago in 1952, which is partially submerged, and is watched over by an especially large beast known as Leviathan. Scenic it may have been, but the downtown area was just not suitable for pedestrians, back then – especially when Leviathan started lobbing people about.



## DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION

LOCATION: DETROIT  
YEAR: 2027

Detroit is a bit of shithole in the near-future, with derelict buildings and criminals everywhere. On the plus side: the city's architects had clearly watched a lot of *Blade Runner*, and stuck lots of pretty light panels on everything to gussy the town up.



## CALL OF DUTY: MODERN WARFARE 3

LOCATION: NEW YORK CITY  
YEAR: 2016

Bloody Russians! Apparently flush with the cash to stage an attack on both East and West coasts, Manhattan took a bit of a battering by the inexplicably large Russian army of the near future.



## LA NOIRE

LOCATION: LOS ANGELES  
YEAR: 1947

"COME ON, YOU, YOU'RE A BIG MURDERER!" The Forties were accusatory times indeed, so says *LA Noire*. You had to be, what with bodies left all over the place and people pulling highly suspicious facial expressions. Criminals would learn to be more discreet across the next 55 years.



## CALL OF JUAREZ: BOUND IN BLOOD

LOCATION: ARKANSAS  
YEAR: 1865

The two cowboy brothers of *Bound In Blood* derp their way into an emerging America and piss off the locals. Things sure were tough, back then, but at least they were well-stocked on saloons and every other Western archetype that's ever existed.



## FALLOUT 3

LOCATION: WASHINGTON DC  
YEAR: 2277

Oops, America has been nuked! Guess the political landscape turned a bit sour, as Washington lies in rubble, infested with super mutants. Instead of learning a good lesson about treating fellow humans with respect, everyone uses the attack as an excuse to create new prejudices.





# ASSASSIN'S CREED III vs RED DEAD REDEMPTION

UBISOFT HAS ADMITTED THERE ARE SOME COINCIDENTAL SIMILARITIES TO ROCKSTAR'S WESTERN MASTERPIECE – LET'S PUT THEM SIDE BY SIDE AND GIVE IT SOME CAREFUL (OR VAGUELY SPECULATIVE) ANALYSIS...



## SETTING

This is the main point of comparison, and fair enough – this is old time America, complete with variable tundra and digital ecosystems, though it's set a long time before *Red Dead*. About 140 years, and all the technology and colonisation that time period encompassed, sets them apart. It's mostly the snow bits that remind us of *Red Dead*, of course, but the way you navigate *ACIII*'s gigantic environments soon makes it clear how different they are.



## CHARACTERS

With *Bill And Ted*-style versions of different historical characters, *Assassin's Creed* goes for a real world ensemble in comparison to *Red Dead*'s classically Rockstar-esque band of mission-giving misfits. Likewise, the protagonists are nothing like each other, with Connor just starting his adventure, and John Marston the grizzled cowboy who's seen and experienced it all.



## ACTIVITIES

Both games are flush with extracurricular activities, and for some players this is how they'll spend the bulk of their time with any open world game: just dicking about. *Assassin's Creed III* compensates for this as well, letting players hunt animals, take part in sea battles and much more as they wander through the American wilderness.



## GAMEPLAY

Well, totally different, of course. The structures of both games might be kind of similar in taking quests across large locales, but *Red Dead*'s GTA-style template and cover shooting feels completely different to the fully armed melee assaults that you can commit in *Assassin's Creed*. Both are terrific at what they set out to achieve.

## CONCLUSION?

Well, the games are separated in almost every way, but it looks like you're just going to have to play *Assassin's Creed III* to find out for sure. Or, wait 'til next issue, and we'll tell you if you should...



> building new technology suggests that they plan to begin a new era in the *AC* series, a la the Ezio trilogy. At this point, approaching the fourth yearly iteration of the series, it's hard to see how Ubisoft could justify not putting an *Assassin's Creed* game out to its shareholders – and this is a series where hundreds of developers are working on it at any given time. Even set across such a large timeframe, we don't imagine this is the last time we'll see Connor in action.

What makes it more special to PlayStation gamers, though, is that the *Assassin's Creed* experience doesn't end there. Spin-off title *Liberation* is a

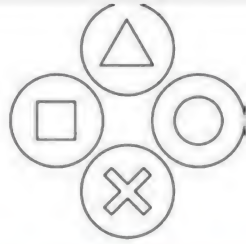
genuine, bona fide, authentic exclusive for the PS Vita. It's not a mini-game, it's not a port and it's not some jumped-up DLC, it's a proper standalone game that looks and feels like it could be on the PS3. Naturally, people would be sceptical of another handheld outing after the PSP's slightly soggy spin-off *Bloodlines*, which half-captured the identity of the franchise, but was patchy in too many key areas to be successful.

The Vita offers Ubisoft so much potential in its power, and we're fortunate enough to be on the receiving end of a spin-off that aims to live up to its console brethren. Aveline de Grandpré, the series' first female





# ASSASSIN'S CREED III



● Character models getting ready for a bloody war.



● Naval battles should shake up the series' mechanics.



● You want to live here. We want to live here. Beautiful.

## NAVIGATING IN TREES IS SUPER EASY TO SAY, BUT THAT'S YEARS OF WORK FROM ANIMATORS, ENGINEERS AND WORLD DESIGNERS

protagonist, is a French-African Assassin who is recruited by the Brotherhood to protect Louisiana from an impending Spanish invasion. What's refreshing about *Liberation* is how intelligently controversial subjects such as slavery and race are handled and woven into the fabric of the game.

"We always like to say that we didn't invent her [Aveline] but she was there waiting to be discovered," says *Liberation* producer Martin Capel, explaining the social relevance of the character. "New Orleans was a fantastic [setting] partly because of the smuggling and partly because the culture was very different.

"It's a French city and one of the problems they had was that they couldn't encourage enough woman to move from Europe to the new world, so they set up this temporary form of marriage. Aveline's father is a wealthy French merchant and takes an African slave as a bride and Aveline is the result of that temporary union. Her father loves her and decides to educate and raise her as a lady, so

Aveline is very much part of the New Orleans society."

What's interesting is that *Liberation* shares the same Anvil engine with *ACIII*, which really demonstrates the power of the Vita and only confirms how seriously high-end an exclusive this really is. Aveline and Connor cross paths in *Liberation*, which is a nice nod to Vita users who shelled out for the extra game, and sort of recalls those scenes in *GTA IV*'s excellent add-on packs that intersected with Niko Bellic's storyline. It's also a nice reminder that without this exclusive you would never have heard the story of Aveline de Grandpré, the assassin from Louisiana – she has a tale worth telling. Between the third instalment and *Liberation*, you're clearly getting the most definitive *Assassin's Creed* experience possible across the two PlayStation platforms.

Since the Vita launched, its potential for crossover with the PlayStation 3 has been relatively untapped. If successful, *Liberation*'s idea of sharing a universe with *Assassin's Creed III*, showing us a different side of the same grander story, could be replicated by other developers working with similarly rich gaming universes. It starts with *Assassin's Creed* – but there are no limits to where it could go after that. ✕

## VERDICT

Stripping back the feature-creep that harmed recent instalments and going back to what makes *Assassin's Creed* great – exploration, navigation and, of course, murder – has put *ACIII* in a fantastic position to be everything we want it to be. But there's always the chance it could feel a bit too bloated for some.

### PLUS POINTS

- + A proper, fully-fledged sequel. Took long enough
- + Less of the pointless nonsense, like first-person *Tetris*
- + Huge, open game world

### MINUS POINTS

- It's still a massive game, and could feel bloated to some
- It looks very good, though the series may be nearing its limits on PS3
- Could be too similar to past instalments to convert non-believers







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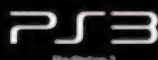




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# Install

Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth

## Need To Know



### Super-slim PS3 is here!

It's 25% smaller and 20% lighter than the old slim and is available with miniscule memory (12GB) or with a hefty, monstrous HDD (500GB). It's Sony catering for those who only want to play FIFA and those who are looking to replace their PS3 with something new. However, it won't be cheaper.

## EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT METAL GEAR SOLID: GROUND ZEROES



**M**etal Gear Solid: Ground Zeroes is coming, and it's looking spectacular. Some might say too good. But not us. It's the first entry to the MGS series using Kojima Productions' much-vaunted FOX Engine, and just one look at the game in motion shows you this is an engine the studio was right to boast about. That's if we get actually something *this* good-looking on PS3, as has been promised.

Set after the events of *Peace Walker*, *Ground Zeroes* has players taking on the role of Naked Snake/Big Boss once more (he's not grey-haired, that's just something to do with 'rim lighting'). Nobody knows the story except for the KojiPro folks – in fact, it's probably all still in Kojima's head – but we can see a number of returning faces from MGS titles past.

The game itself is an open world experience with full day and night cycles, the ability to steal vehicles like helicopters and jeeps and the chance to call in support choppers offering firepower and evacuation facilities,

blaring out the music of your choice (louder music equals more likelihood of discovery, of course). And, according to what we've heard, you won't be seeing the iconic Game Over screen in *Ground Zeroes* – there just won't be game overs as we know it. It's all very interesting; it's all very Kojima – which you would expect with Hideo himself returning to direct a home console MGS title for the first time since *MGS4*.

It's not all perfect, mind you – but the chinks in the armour are just serving to prove *Ground Zeroes* is indeed a current-gen prospect. While it is an open world game, insofar as you will have large, open areas to explore on missions, there are still elements like loading screens that will break up the flow. A dealbreaker? Absolutely not. It's still open world, it's just not seamless or streaming, a la something like *Just Cause 2*.

One matter of particular interest, however, is how Hideo Kojima has referred to *Ground Zeroes* as a 'prologue' to *Metal Gear Solid 5*. The man will never be done with this series, it seems.

## SNAKE AND FRIENDS

Confirmed faces



### BIG BOSS

**PREVIOUS APPEARANCES:**  
Metal Gear, Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake, MGS 3: Snake Eater, MGS: Portable Ops,

MGS 4: Guns Of The Patriots, MGS: Peace Walker  
Naked Snake, Jack, Big Boss, Vic Boss, whatever you want to call him, he's the big dog. The man. The lynchpin of pretty much the entire *Metal Gear* series. *Ground Zeroes* will bring us more of his story as we follow the tragic tale of a man consistently screwed over.



### CHICO

**PREVIOUS APPEARANCES:**  
MGS: Peace Walker  
A former child soldier and sometime companion of Big Boss

and co. in *Peace Walker*, Chico makes an appearance in *Ground Zeroes*. It's not all streamers and fanfare though, as the young 'un is confined in a cage and being blackmailed – threatened, even – into turning against Big Boss in some way. Will he give up his friend and mentor? Will he refuse? And just why does he have a headphone socket in his chest?



### THE BURNED MAN

**PREVIOUS APPEARANCES:**  
Possibly Metal Gear Solid 3

As with the rumours, this chap could well be *MGS3*'s main antagonist Volgin, who had a rather electrified, flaming, explosive death. But we still have our reservations about who this scar-faced bad guy really is. What is safe to say is that we have not seen him – at least in this form – in any previous *Metal Gear* title, but we're sure he'll have a story to tell. In super-long cut-scene form.



# IMPORTANT GAMING NEWS YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO MISS



**Rez creator Mizuguchi 'leaves' gaming**  
Tetsuya Mizuguchi, creator of cult classics *Rez*, *Space Channel 5* and Move-compatible *Child Of Eden*, has stopped producing games. He's now serving as a 'spokesperson' and a more delegatory role within Q Entertainment. Shame.



**Gravity Rush sequel**  
Keiichiro Toyama, director of *Gravity Rush*, confirmed on his Twitter account that a sequel to the quirky PS Vita title is in the works. The team is already hard at work on the follow-up to one of PS Vita's stronger offerings to date, which earned a yet-to-be-beaten 86% in our review.



**More Dragon's Dogma**  
It sold surprisingly well and so this news isn't quite as surprising. Capcom has confirmed 'major expansion' *Dark Arisen* is due next year. Capcom's mysterious Japanese trailer speaks of a 'new demise', possibly a reference to us being given another chance to throw players' pawns off a cliff again.



## GROUND ZEROES RUMOUR MILL



**1** There are flashes – jumps, it seems – in the footage we've seen of *Ground Zeroes*. There's technology of a far more advanced stage than it should be in the time just after *Peace Walker*. Big Boss has grey hair in some images, brown hair in others. Does this mean we'll be seeing time jumping around as the game is played, covering all aspects of the building of FOXHOUND, Outer Heaven and other such MGS lore? That's what some think.

### WHAT WE THINK:

The hair colour thing... well, isn't. It's a lighting effect. It's Big Boss, and it's set after *Peace Walker*. The advanced tech is just MGS being MGS, we reckon.



**2** Promotional artwork for what turned out to be *Ground Zeroes* showed Big Boss standing with a hound next to him – not a foxhound, but a Rhodesian Ridgeback, native to South Africa. This being the country where Big Boss's Outer Heaven was set up; a refuge for soldiers disillusioned with their home nation's handling of war and warriors. So surely this means *Ground Zeroes* will be set in and around South Africa, right? Makes sense.

### THE PLAY VERDICT:

Correlation is not causation, this much we know, but it seems a deliberate ploy to point in the direction of South Africa. We'd go with: yeah, sure, why not?



**3** Big Boss produces a handheld device called the IDroid that emits a holographic, PDA-style screen. In-game, this will surely be some form of map or radar, but what about out of the game? Does it mean we'll be seeing Vita crossover with *Ground Zeroes*, the handheld operating as an always-running screen for the IDroid system? It's the sort of gimmick developers use, and Sony is keen to push cross-functionality between PS3 and Vita.

### TRUE OR FALSE:

KojiPro has already experimented with PS3/Vita crossover on the *MGS HD Collection*, so we wouldn't rule it out for the studio to try again with *Ground Zeroes*.



**4** The chap we've seen on *Ground Zeroes* – you know the guy: burned face, looks a bit sketchy – just who is he? Early reactions pointed immediately at Volgin, antagonist of *MGS3* and bloke who was incinerated and riddled with holes at the end of that game. But other folks have pointed to burned enemies past like The Fury, also from *MGS3* – though missing his trademark space suit makes us question that claim.

### DAFT OR NOT DAFT:

Kojima has said he is bringing back 'dead' characters, and MGS games past are rife with examples (Big Boss himself). But we're not sure about Volgin – he seems too slight.



“It's the first entry to the MGS series using Kojima Productions' much-vaunted FOX Engine, and just one look at the game in motion shows you this is an engine the studio was very much right to boast about”



**KAZ "MASTER" MILLER**  
**PREVIOUS APPEARANCES:**  
*Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake*, *MGS* (impersonated), *MGS: Peace Walker*

While he became opposed to the direction Big Boss's life took, the time-frame of *Ground Zeroes* puts Kaz firmly in the grounds of 'still Snake's mate'. Friend, confidant, teacher and constant wearer of shades, Miller has been revealed as mission support to Big Boss in KojiPro's latest. Will he make more of an appearance?



**XOF**  
**PREVIOUS APPEARANCES:**  
(as FOX) *Metal Gear Solid 3*, *Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops*

Big Boss made his first playable appearance in the *Metal Gear* games as an operative for FOX. This military group, with CIA affiliations, is disbanded by the time *Ground Zeroes* occurs – but there's the rather sinister organisation known as XOF at work. Led by the Burned Man, this unit is why Chico is in captivity and why Big Boss is on a mission to rescue the youngster.



# INSTALL

## Trailer failer

First time around, the *Dead Island* trailer was great (if a little melodramatic). Second time around, the *Riptide* trailer isn't so great



Sailing! It's emotional, and literally nothing can go wrong!



Though something has gone wrong because she's crying.



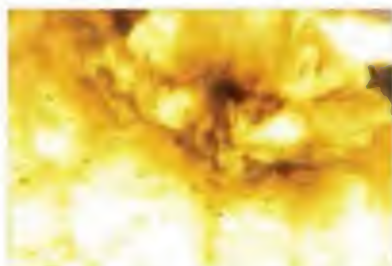
Don't worry though, pretty lady – for we have turned the gas on! It cures tears, as we all know.



Wait... aren't lighters and lots of gas known to be bad for boats?



Though it has to be said something needs to be done about these boat-hating zombies.



Something like AN EXPLOSION OF EMOTION.



# DEAD ISLAND: RIPTIDE

## CAN IT AVOID BEING DEAD IN THE WATER?

Just how can Techland's sequel be the game we always hoped the original would be?

### REASONS TO CARE ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

We don't demand all our game characters fit into traditional archetypes – and the *Dead Island* lot (returning for *Riptide*) definitely didn't do that. But they were annoying and terrible people, generally. We want a reason to actually like them, so maybe the story in *Riptide* can give us just that.

### AI SMARTER THAN AN ACTUAL ZOMBIE

They see you, they run at you, you batter them. Not that it wasn't satisfying, but it did get very samey after a while. We know they're zombies, we accept they're dumb, but can't they have some element of tactics about them? It would make things a thousand times more interesting.

### CONCISE, ACCURATE BRUTALITY

Hitting a former beach bully (now zombie) with an oar should be hilarious and thoroughly rewarding. It shouldn't feel like you're waving a twig in the direction of a vague breeze. One definite way to add to *Riptide* in so, so many ways is to increase the overall thwack factor by an order of magnitude.

### MORE ZOMBIES

There were plenty of the undead shufflers on display first time around, don't get us wrong. But we'd like to see more – *at once*. Imagine it: you're wandering around a flooded church, you hear a rumbling, all of a sudden 40 zombies pile around the corner and oh you've just soiled yourself.

### FEWER BUGS

It's difficult to iron out all of the bugs – we get that – but *Dead Island* was pretty damn buggy. A bit more care and attention to this element and we won't have to make hilarious bug videos like we did last time around. Just sayin'.





# GOD OF WAR: ASCENSION



## facebook facebook.com/PlayMagUK

I adore the *GOW* series and felt *III* was the perfect farewell, but *Ascension* just seems to be a step too far. There is so much potential for expansion in the series but sadly it seems the developers are scared to play with the formula.  
**JAMES WARD**

I was impressed with the "Before he was a god, he was a man" thing. But I hoped it was going have a new combat system. But no, just the same old *God Of War*.  
**GEORGE THORNEY**

Enjoyed the first two but felt the series became repetitive and this new game may not add anything! Will pass on it! Graphics look good though!  
**ELLIE ROXANNE CLARK**

Great series: no doubt. However I feel prequels are annoying as you know what's gonna happen. I feel I have to be positive regarding *GOW* so I will buy it, while if it was another series I probably would wait.  
**PAUL JONES**

Possibly a *GOW* too far. Depends on whether or not they do something new with the latest iteration.  
**SEAN MARKEY**

Good storyline, but too repetitive, i.e. hack and slash repeat, it gets boring after a while and in the end you are like, "What's the rest of the story?" You are constantly having to hack and slash your way through stuff just to get to the next cut-scene... it's ridiculous.  
**NATASHA HANDY**

## YouTube youtube.com/PlayMagUK

It could be an epic multiplayer game.  
**AGATON DE HELLSING**

The multiplayer doesn't look as bad as I thought it would at first. But the single-player looks a lot better.  
**DANNY GANKI**

The single-player campaign is epic, no doubt, but it's nice to see something new, so maybe I'm not gonna stop to play this game after a maximum of ten hours.  
**ADAMJENSEN91**

## twitter twitter.com/PlayMag\_UK

**@HELLO\_CAMO** The ultimate example of tacked-on multiplayer due to the pressure of *COD* syndrome.

**@MCKKIRK** It looks hyper violent (which is kind of the point) I just hope it retains its intelligent puzzles. Multiplayer looks pointless.

**@ATTARD\_JOE** Is the answer testicles? Testicles. Testicles. Thanks.

**@EMMZYNE** Looks decent. Will we discover the origins of Kratos's anger management issues? He was always miffed at SOMETHING or other.

**@FENIXII** It's still the same... so I'll reserve my judgment till it's out.

**@ADAM\_ANOUER** Given how the series usually advances they should've renamed it *God of War: Transcension*.

## Play Online

Want to share your thoughts? Shout into our digital ears at [facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK](https://facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK), [youtube.com/PlayMagUK](https://youtube.com/PlayMagUK) and [@PlayMag\\_UK](https://twitter.com/PlayMag_UK), where we hang out when we're not doing work (i.e. all the ruddy time).



## THE COMEBACK

# "THIS IS SACKBOY'S YEAR"

Sony's mascot determined to fight back

The end of this gaming year might be about the likes of Connor, Leon S Kennedy and Alex Mason. But *LittleBigPlanet* producer Tom O'Connor has reminded us about an old fan favourite determined to grab the spotlight for himself. "This is definitely Sackboy's year," O'Connor told us. "As well as the games, the full games and DLC games, he's also appearing in games like *PlayStation All-Stars*. I think he's really found his space this year. It does feel like it's exploded. *LittleBigPlanet* is a massively important franchise for us. It's got a massive

community, it's been a great success and the most important thing for us is that we choose the right adventures for Sackboy and that each game he goes into is a quality title."

**"If you look at LBP Vita and the reviews that are coming in, people are saying it's the most definitive version"**

There's also *LittleBigPlanet 2*'s crossplay pack with Vita, allowing you to control PS3 action with the handheld's touchscreen. "The thing with Vita is it's an amazingly powerful device," he explained. "I think people are realising that. If you look at *LBP Vita* and the reviews that are coming in, people are

saying it's the most definitive version. You look at the market and you see people using devices differently. People have multiple touch-screen devices and they want to access their content in different ways. This is our way of doing that. You've got crossbuy, where you buy once and you get it twice. You have crossplay, so you can play head to head with friends but on different platforms such as PlayStation 3 and Vita. This is another way to use both devices together in unique ways but not just as gimmicks. It'll give you a different kind of experience."

## SALES OF PS3 EXCLUSIVES

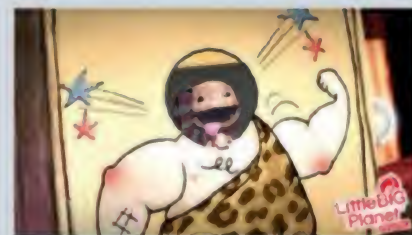


## SACKBOY IN 2012



### LITTLEBIGPLANET VITA

This scored a juicy 93% in our review last issue, with Sony's series proving it's a perfect fit for Vita thanks to the touchscreen controls allowing you to create levels with even greater ease than you could previously.



### LITTLEBIGPLANET 2 VITA CROSSPLAY

One of the initiatives Sony is pushing for Vita is the idea of crossplay, allowing you to use your Vita as an extra screen or input device for games on your PS3. *LittleBigPlanet 2* is the biggest game so far to use the feature.



### LITTLEBIGPLANET KARTING

The *ModNation* developers are behind this one, which lets you race around as Sackboy, customising tracks and weapons. Producer Jen Timms told us one of their designers recreated *Journey* using the in-game tools.



### PLAYSTATION ALL-STARS BATTLE ROYALE

Besides his close-range attacks, Sackboy brings the creative chaos of *LittleBigPlanet* into this mash-up brawler. Spider-webs, teleports, fans, reflectors, burning objects and sticking opponents in item bubbles are among his moves.





## NEW LOOK AT NEW GAMES

# SCREENSHOTS BLAST

### INJUSTICE: GODS AMONG US

**1** Batman continues his tradition of never smiling in *Injustice: Gods Among Us*. We're still waiting for confirmation that Swamp Thing is in it. Or Green Arrow.

### WWE '13

**2** This is either Big Show having let off some potent man-made gas or *WWE '13* showing off how it lets you relive the biggest moments from the show.

### MGR: REVENGEANCE

**3** Can Raiden absorb life-force from cyborg spines? If this screenshot is anything to go by, we say "Most definitely! Maybe. Hmm. We're not sure."

### TALES OF XILLIA

**4** Liked *Tales Of Graces*? Have the first screen from the English version of *Tales Of Xillia*. Actually, you can have it even if you didn't like *Tales Of Graces*. We're that generous.

# MASS EFFECT 4 INBOUND

## But what's next?

As BioWare co-founders Ray Muzyka and Greg Zeschuk announced their departure from the company, BioWare Edmonton GM Aaron Flynn spoke of a new *Mass Effect* title. "The *Mass Effect* universe is vast, and Casey [Hudson, producer] and our teams have plans for another full game," Flynn said. What can they do now the threat of the Reapers has been dealt with? A series prequel about the Protheans is one idea but should EA do a *Mass Effect* game without any human presence?



## HD GRABBER FACE-OFF

In one corner, the Hauppauge HD PVR 2, in the other the Roxio Game Capture HD Pro. Which is worth your cash?



### HAUPPAUGE HD PVR 2

PRICE: £159.99

MAX VIDEO OUTPUT: 1080i, H.264

A bit of fiddling, some software installation, a couple of restarts, re-setting up the PS3 for component output (you can't record through HDMI because of HDCP encryption) and then – bam – we were ready to go. Once you're set up, the HD PVR 2 only requires you to press the button on top of the unit itself. You don't even have to be looking at your PC to start and stop recording. Once you're done, the included software allows you to quickly and easily trim the beginning and end of the video, before uploading it to YouTube.

#### PROS:

- ✓ Video quality is good
- ✓ Simple, once it's set up
- ✓ All cables included

#### CONS:

- ✗ Bundled software only allows trimming, not editing of videos
- ✗ No direct tie-in with upload services beyond YouTube
- ✗ Pricier

OVERALL ★★★★★



### ROXIO GAME CAPTURE HD PRO

PRICE: £129.99

MAX VIDEO OUTPUT: 1080i, H.264

The Roxio immediately confused us by not actually coming with any of the video cables necessary to get it up and working – fortunately we could simply co-opt the services of the included Hauppauge cables. Success! This bump in the road negotiated, we got to work grabbing. As with the competition, it produces good quality video at a reasonable file size – but unlike the competition the bundled software allows a bit more than just trimming and uploading. There's the ability to stream directly to TwitchTV while you're playing, and you can add in a few basic but useful transitions, text overlays and suchlike to personalise your videos a bit more.

#### PROS:

- ✓ Bundled software allows a fair bit of video editing
- ✓ Direct links/uploads to the likes of TwitchTV
- ✓ Cheaper

#### CONS:

- ✗ Doesn't come with video cables
- ✗ Needs you to man your PC at all times
- ✗ Umm... it's a bit ugly?

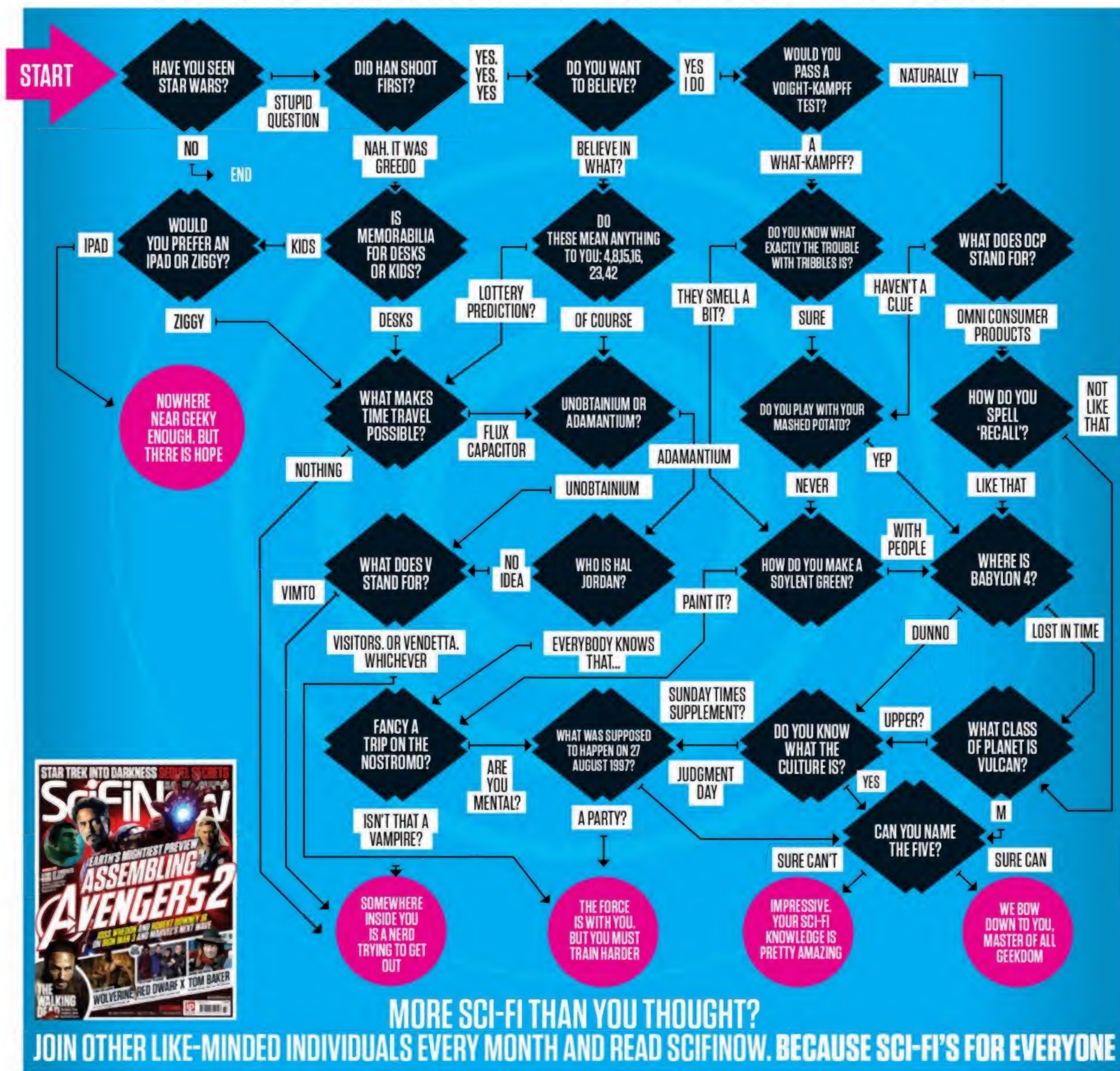
OVERALL ★★★★★



**CLOSING COMMENTS:** If you have the cables already, you might as well get the cheaper option. If you don't want to look at your PC all the time, go for the Hauppauge. Simple.



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## Why cosplay as Juliet Starling?

More like "Why not"? She's a zombie-killing cheerleader with a severed head as a boyfriend! What's not to love? I see a lot of Juliet's character in myself, which really helps to drive a cosplay home. Also, that chainsaw is pretty darn awesome!

## When you cosplay as Juliet Starling or other characters, is there ever a concern that someone else might have cosplayed the same character as you at the same convention? Do you get matching outfit fear?

Haha, well, sort of! I mean, it's really cool when you see someone dressed as the same character because they're doing exactly what you're doing; dressing as someone they like or really connect with. On the other hand, cosplayers have a tendency to size each other up. People can be quite critical so there's always that concern that someone's going to pick out the inaccuracies of your costume. Oh, well! It's still fun.

## What did you think of *Lollipop Chainsaw*? Ian said "We recommend it with all our hearts: it's stupid, utterly wanton and everything a videogame should be, even with arguments concerning sexism going this way and that." Do you agree with him? It's okay not to agree with him. In many ways we'd prefer it because it would break his heart and that would be funny.

Personally, I thought the game was hilarious. Then again, I'm a pretty relaxed chick so I didn't take it too seriously! I can see how people could think that the game is sexist. There's a Trophy for looking up Juliet's skirt! When I first played through the game there were times where I was a little bit put off but after a while, I didn't take it so seriously. The main protagonist is, after all, an ass-kicking girl wielding an adorable chainsaw and slashing zombies, so I'm a happy camper.

## What happens at the conventions themselves when you're dressed up as Juliet Starling? Do people ask you to rev your chainsaw? Do they ask where Nick is?

People love to say "Look! It's Lollipop Chainsaw!" I don't have the heart to turn around and tell them my name is not actually Lollipop Chainsaw, it's Juliet, so I mostly just have a giggle and smile. I get a lot of attention at conventions, even if people don't know who I am! It's all really exciting when people come up and ask for photos. People always ask where my chainsaw is at conventions! When I go to conventions, I'm not allowed to take my chainsaw. Mainly because it's a real, petrol-fuelled chainsaw. Eep! As for Nick, I tend to say that I've lost him!

## What's the weirdest convention or fan story you have?

Weird stories about cosplay?! NEVER! Haha. I haven't had all that many strange things happen to me while I'm in costume! I guess it's pretty strange when people start drawing fan art of you dressed as a character you're cosplaying as. That's pretty crazy!

# JULIET STARLING

At this point, Lollipop Chainsaw deserves an entry in the Cosplay Hall Of Fame for its services to cosplay. Reppin' the Australian Juliet Starling is Gabriella Tachi!

Photo © Ecky Reyes

“She's a zombie-killing cheerleader with a severed head as a boyfriend. What's not to love?”



“I thought the game was hilarious. Then again, I'm a pretty relaxed chick so I didn't take it too seriously!”





“ The only thing vaguely interesting and beyond the usual fare looks to be Far Cry 3 ”



# YES TO NEW IDEAS

Games are great, but brand new concepts need to shake it up



**YOU KNOW VIDEOGAMES,** yeah? Those things we play? The things we talk about in **Play?** The reason I've got

the sleeping pattern of a bona-fide idiot and am incapable of being a truly social creature? You know those things? Yeah? They're rubbish.

Alright, they're not rubbish. Not at all. They're great. They're fun. I love them. But they could be – and *should* be – so much more. For all the fun I have in gaming, for all the times a story forms itself out of nothing in front of my eyes and lets me excitedly relate it to others in the office (who pretend to care, if they're being nice) the next day – for all of that, I constantly feel it's lacking.

Because there's no imagination. Videogames, as they are, can be literally anything. They can be about anything, set anywhere, featuring anything a person could possibly imagine. So why aren't they everything?

Looking at 2012's end-of-year releases it's just a blast of a lack of imagination. *Hitman: Absolution* is just killing people in a very normal world. *Assassin's Creed III* strives for a level of historical accuracy and realistic (ish) free-running. *Call Of Duty: Black Ops II* has REAL GUNS YEAH, while *Medal Of Honor: Warfighter* nearly sends me into a coma every time I think about it, so lacking as it is in any imaginative, interesting elements. The only thing vaguely interesting and beyond the usual fare looks to be *Far Cry 3* – it's just a straightforward shooter, yes, but it does at least dabble with the notion of insanity. So there's that.

Even games like *PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale* leave me cold, at least in the imagination factor – it brings together every interesting and unique character you might possibly relate to Sony's games and throws them all in a mixing pot together... so they

can just beat each other up. Similarly, *LittleBigPlanet Karting*, based on one of the most creatively-driven series ever made, brings that supremely imaginative and interesting franchise into the world of... sigh... kart racing.

Does this make them bad games? Not at all. I know for a fact I'll enjoy playing most of those mentioned above. But I'll always feel it eating away at the back of my mind: the fact that the games I'm playing could be so much *more*.

You see *Wonderbook*, you see *Epic Mickey: The Power Of Two*, you see people *are* trying. But these efforts seem perpetually stuck in the world of kids games, with little bleed-through into the 'adult' mainstream. This makes me think of the world of cartoons, which offers some of the most imaginative and creatively diverse work out there, but tend to be just for da kids.

Maybe it's not just gaming where the problem lies.

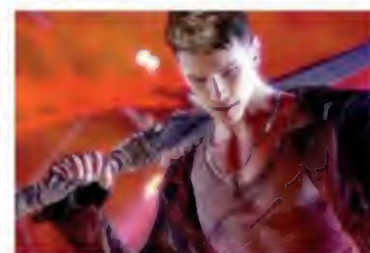


You might look at this and sneer derisively, but at least *Wonderbook* is trying to be something new.





Sam Fisher's gone through some sort of radical degnarling. What other characters have?



## DANTE - DMC

### THE WONDER YEARS

Dante never aged anyway, (save for a crap beard in *DMC4*), but he's gone right back to his late teens for the reboot, replete with scruffy clothes, potty mouth and a decidedly scruffier black hairdo. His taste in music is probably appalling now too.



## NATHAN SPENCER - BIONIC COMMANDO

### GINGE NO MORE

The *Bionic Commando* reboot/sequel caused all sorts of umbrage, especially due to Nathan Spencer's shocking new appearance. The plucky redhead of old was gone, replaced by a younger looking dreadlocked nu-metal Spencer that sounded like Mike Patton. One button made him say a rudey, it was brilliant.



## LARA CROFT - TOMB RAIDER

### EXTREME MAKEOVER

Lara no longer looks like someone featured on Eurotrash (to be fair she hasn't for a while), and has been given a softer, less severe makeover for her new origin story. Keeley Hawes isn't the voice actor any more either, replaced by the even plummier-sounding Camilla Luddington. Golly.



## OTACON - METAL GEAR SOLID 4

### BEAUTIFUL GEEK

Otacon didn't really de-age as such, he just turned into some kind of unwitting sex god. He went from piddling himself in fear to bedding the cute Doctor, even after admitting he liked anime. Not even James Bond could get away with that kind of confession.

## SKULKING IN THE SHADOWS

A recent video showed that veterans may not have anything to fear about the game, as it's perfectly possible to play sneaky sneaky with your unsuspecting quarry, and avoid them altogether, with the odd bit of *Uncharted*-style cliffhanging for extra pomp.

## THE GOGGLES, THEY DO NOTHING

Sam's gone all goggle-eyed again, if that kind of thing is important to you. Maybe it indicates a return to the stealthier, more patient *Splinter Cell* of old, rather than the faster paced *Conviction*. Although...

## MARK OF THE ASSASSIN

It's no real surprise given the monumental success of *Assassin's Creed*, that Sam Fisher's latest takes the odd cue from the hoodied menaces that dominate that franchise. Sam moves with a lot more fluidity than in past games.

## NOT KILLING ME SOFTLY

They've introduced a new mechanic called Killing In Motion, which lets you (as you can probably guess) kill in motion. It adds a new fluidity to your death-dealing, which'll leave series veterans aghast.

## TAKE A WALK ON THE IRONSIDE

Gravel-voiced perma-baddy Michael Ironside has finally hung up his goggles, and in his stead we have the much younger Eric Johnson, who was in *Ginger Snaps 2*, along with a load of other stuff we don't recognise.

## CHOICES, CHOICES

The main grievance that people had with *Conviction* was that it was horribly linear in comparison to the sneaky sandboxes that were afforded to players in the previous games. That isn't the case this time, and there's a lot more options for sneaky wannabes.

## SNEAK TO SUCCESS

*Blacklist* seems to have done a good job of marrying the old with the new, and could well be the most polished, accomplished *Splinter Cell* to date. Whether it does enough to convince the *Chaos Theory* hardcore is another matter, but it's loitering up the right street.

## A STORIED CAREER

It's hard to care about the plots in *Splinter Cell* games. Compared to a certain other stealth franchise there's a disappointing lack of cyborg ninjas and belching monkeys. *Blacklist*, though, promises to try and make things a wee bit more intriguing, with Sam spearheading a new top secret elite group of mega-agents.

# SPLINTER CELL: BLACKLIST

Sam Fisher's back and itching for a fight



## TOP 5 HATED CHARACTERS (THAT YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO HATE)

Finding characters everyone hates is easy enough. But what about the ones we were *supposed* to like? Sometimes, you've got to wonder what game developers were thinking...

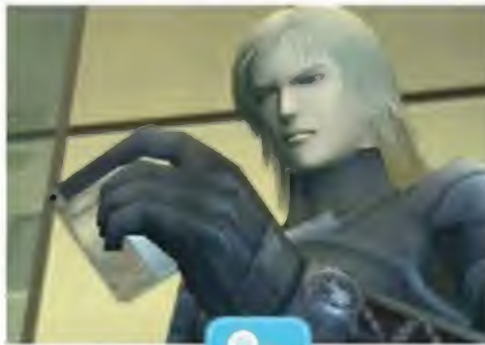


### 1 RICO VELASQUEZ (KILLZONE 3)

This happens when suits too high up in marketing departments decide they know what 'da kids' want. Rico is an awkward mess of attitude, shouting and dudebro fistbumps and in any case, *Killzone 3* was an 18-rated game, so 'da kids' shouldn't even have played it. So who was he for? Rico is the equivalent of morons cooking steak for vegetarians.

### 2 RAIDEN (MGS2)

In retrospect, the idea was sound. Show Snake through the eyes of another character, which did actually make you appreciate him more. But nothing made us appreciate Snake as much as being forced to play as a floppy-haired, whiny-voiced emo with a presence as intimidating as a Russian gymnast.



### 3 KEN (STREET FIGHTER)

Honestly, if you pick Ken, just don't talk to us. Don't talk to us, don't play *Street Fighter* with us, don't pretend you've bothered learning Ken beyond mashing out dragon punch motions with punch whenever the other so much as flinches. Just don't. We know your filthy kind. You animals.



### 4 JASON (HEAVY RAIN)

As someone on a fellow mag pointed out, "But he's only in the game for about four seconds." Yet that's long enough for him to leave Ethan's side and end up beneath the wheels of a car. It's a miracle he made it to ten years old. He was probably trying to push chips into wall sockets when he was four.



### 5 DIANA ALLERS (MASS EFFECT 3)

Maybe BioWare genuinely thought that having a real-life gaming reporter squeaking her lines as a news reporter in *Mass Effect* would be endearing. Also, maybe the world is flat, maybe Santa Claus is real and maybe someone out there does actually like the taste of prawn cocktail crisps. What do we know, right?

## TEAM PICKS The characters we hate the most



### SAMUEL DAXTER

Daxter has never said anything funny. He's the worst comedy sidekick, imbued with the self-belief that he's some kind of Joe Pesci-style rascal, rather than a knobhead.



### RYAN SHEVA ALOMAR

I got sliced to critical health levels by a bladey creature thing, spotted a first-aid spray, then Sheva stole it and ran off just as I got there. Never forgiven her. Or Capcom.



### IAN CLIFFJUMPER

A stupid waste of robo-skin ("metal"), with his stupid face that isn't Optimus Prime's and his stupid voice that isn't Optimus Prime's and his stupid everything else.



### ANDY ULFRIC STORMCLOAK

In many games, joining the rebels to fight the Imperials is generally a good thing, and that's how it's sold to you in *Skyrim*, until you meet this massive racist.



# FINAL FANTASY XIII'S LIGHTNING

The pink-haired protagonist of the whole Final Fantasy XIII clusterfudge is due to make her final sour, butterbean-faced appearance in the recently announced Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns. What makes the woman?

## FROWN

Anyone that's played through *Final Fantasy XIII* will be fully aware of just how desperately unhappy Lightning seems to be all the time. She's so cripplingly depressed she makes Cloud Strife look like Mr Motivator. Okay, the world is going batty, her sister's turned into crystal and she's hanging out with dunderheads like Hope and Vanille, but surely she can find a moment to look up some Neil Hamburger jokes on the internet and crack a smile? On the plus side, at least she'll never have some sort of colossal breakdown and start laughing maniacally like Tidus in *Final Fantasy X*. Crrriiiiiinge.

## FASHIONISTA

Because there's an unwritten clause that says *Final Fantasy* characters aren't allowed to wear sensible clothes like cardigans and trainers, Lightning (who lest we forget, is supposed to be some sort of elite soldier) runs around in highly impractical, supermodel attire. You'd think given the overwhelming opposition she's facing (including dinosaurs, deranged army generals and God) she'd invest in some proper armour. She sorted this out in *Final Fantasy XIII-2* somewhat, looking like some sort of Valkyrie. Hopefully in *Lightning Returns* she has a nice woolly hat or something.

## SISTER ACT

Despite being a sourpuss, there's a softer side to Lightning, as everything done in *Final Fantasy XIII* was done to save her sister Serah. Serah's much daintier than Lightning, and is engaged to a chap called Snow, who looks like *Devil May Cry*'s Dante but is somehow even more over the top and irritating. Owing to her sister fighting in some celestial dimension, Serah becomes the protagonist of *Final Fantasy XIII-2*, and along with a guy from the future called Noel, she sets about fixing a load of time paradoxes in order to open gateways to Lightning's direction to reunite, but in the process she uncovers more paradoxes and and and... do you remember when computer games were just a wee man jumping?

## SO ALONE

Lightning was accompanied in her first adventure by a ragtag crew of flaming idiots, ranging from an Australian girl on PCP to a man with a chocobo living in his afro (named after the serial killer from *Batman* for some reason). They were probably the most unlikable characters in a *Final Fantasy* game ever, and in a series that's character (and haircut) driven that's a cardinal sin. However! Lightning won't have any of those squares holding her back in her upcoming game as she's doing this one alone. There's a world to save, and she won't have to babysit those goons while getting it done. Who knows, maybe this'll be a chance to get to know her better, see what makes her tick. Maybe she can cut loose and really let rip with her combat. Maybe, just maybe, we wish they'd hurry up with a *Final Fantasy VII* remake instead.

## JUST DIE NOW

NO WONDER MOST RECENT FINAL FANTASY PROTAGONISTS ARE MISERABLE. LOOK AT THE COMPANY LIGHTNING, SQUALL, CLOUD AND OTHERS HAVE HAD TO KEEP



### WAKKA - FFX

A disgustingly upbeat and annoying jock, he's one consonant away from having the most appropriate name ever. Ends up hooking up with the cute goth, proving the world is a cruel, unfair place. We hate him.



### YUFFIE - FFXVII

Not annoying in the traditional sense, but she does end up nicking your equipment and causing you a bunch of hassle. She was really irritating in the *Advent Children* film too. Everybody was, though.



### MOG - FFXIII-2

A moogles that accompanies Noel and Serah through the time-travelling mess of *Final Fantasy XIII-2*. A wee... thing that exclaims "Kupo!" all the time. You're able to throw it at things after a while. It's not much but it's something.



### HOPE - FFXIII

Square outdo themselves with this mewling, saccharine angst little git, who manages to be the most awful character in the wreckage of human waste that is the cast of *Final Fantasy XIII*. Okay, his mum just died, but still.



# Re:Play

You are the controller! But only on these pages

Vita is still the hot topic! Although not as hot as it once was. A similar warmth to a Pot Noodle you forgot about when you started watching TV while letting the ingredients settle.

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## PS VITA DEFENCE FORCE

First of all, loving the new look mag last month, however, this letter is more to stop this frequent PS Vita-bashing. I recently purchased myself a PS Vita, bought it with no games at first, my first opinion after having the Vita in my hands and having a little play with it, I found the beautiful colours on the screen a little like a mini HD screen, a lot like the retina display of Apple's products, the menu system is beautiful and compact yet smartly detailed to see exactly what is where, the music is cool and plays on a loop yet never seems to get old, but my favourite feature is the large touchscreen being used from the outset in an all-round smart way.

The apps are smartly applied and particularly the Near app that finds players near you is cool, however, other apps are disappointments, particularly for me, the Treasure Park apps and Trophies (for a very annoying reason). First, Treasure Park is a disappointing app simply because of lack of

users contributing to the game for others to enjoy, another is the fact I am so terrible at it. But Trophies for me is annoying as it doesn't sync with my PS3 trophies. By this I mean when I check my trophies or view them on my PS3, my Vita trophies do not show up, whereas on the Vita I can view both sets. This isn't so much of an annoyance of the app but an annoyance of the whole trophies system in general.

I have read other senders slamming the selection of games, which I can agree with to some extent; there is a lack of large sandbox games which I would have enjoyed playing on my little system, but, on the other hand there are some very fun games to be played, if you want to enjoy your portable console as you should, *Little Deviants* is a brilliant game which uses every part of the Vita's controls (motion sensor, front and rear touch pads, camera etc.). *Wipeout* is a fantastic racing game which seems perfectly suited to this beautiful console with a beautiful screen which is lovingly filled with destruction, perfect! I enjoyed the first FPS venture on the console too, *Resistance* is very buggy and glitchy but it is easy to get into and play without feeling bored if you pay attention to the story, at first it seemed short with only six chapters, but each chapter is long and has different ways of defeating Chimera.

My final game is *Uncharted*, this is a let down compared to other PS3 adventures of Nathan Drake, but the length of the game is always good, not just a short game to make money from the Vita, it seems it was put in development for a long time and worked well with a lot of things to do and also a large replay value with the mysteries to solve, yet it does show the frailties of being a new piece of hardware for the developers, as is really expected.

The Vita has yet to show its full potential and I expect developers to bring out some awesome games out soon for everyone's enjoyment in mind. *Call Of Duty* is just the start, and *LittleBigPlanet* I believe will become one of the greatest games for the console due to it really suiting the way the Vita works, maybe even better than PS3 versions. All in all I love the PS Vita and can't wait for the games to pick up and become even better for our enjoyment. P.S. I am about to go purchase *LBP* now and play in my man cave for hours, much to the annoyance of my girlfriend.

Alex Old

Yes Alex! Shots fired! Vita haters on blast! We're on your side here. Vita is awesome. People complain about the lack of games but have they played them all yet? No. Well, then.

## ★ STAR LETTER ★ A POEM FOR PLAY

Its 4 am, I have work in two hours, but I wanna place just one more block,  
I'd love an active life outside this room but I want to make this plastic guitar rock.  
There have been others over the years but I fondly remember you Pong  
I'll never forget you Amstrad, all of your bases are belong  
Apparently I'm too old for this now and should really have kids and rot  
Being a gamer and a thirty something socially acceptable it is not  
At work, when I type, I now hover over W.A.S.D.  
At home I should eat, but have a joypad calling out to me  
My wife is leaving, said I bore her discussing the games  
To her the tales of my adventures always sound the same  
I suppose if it all goes to hell... and my life truly falls apart  
At least I'll have three more, so long as I collect her heart.

Chris

Are we supposed to read this letter to the tune of *Stan* by Eminem?  
Because it totally fits.



## Things you may have missed on our YouTube page

YouTube  
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**BORDERLANDS 2**  
MOST ANNOYING GLITCH EVER



**BORDERLANDS 2**  
RYAN & IAN PLAY CO-OP



**RED DEAD REDEMPTION**  
PLAY COMMUNITY NIGHT





**Write in, and win!** Star Letter winners bag a free game. This month, the prize is *Formula One 2012*, which is perfect if you like high speed, Nicole Scherzinger and people waving flags at you when you're driving like a drunk. Don't drive over the grass. It's really not a shortcut.



## THE BIG ISSUE ESPORTS – THE NEXT BIG THING?

With your article last week and the growing idea of eSports, the world of competitive gaming is expanding, but I can't help feel that it takes away what makes gaming so great. Maybe it's because I'm not very competitive and don't exactly have a fighting spirit but, personally, the label of the World's Greatest Gamer means nothing. Gaming is about having fun, not about crying into your pillow because some 14 year old taboo little smellyface just ended your killstreak. Developers (except Activision) constantly try to create an involving world, one where the player can lose themselves and enjoy themselves. Even with games like *Street Fighter*, I don't see how it can be seen as a real sport. It's great to train your fingers to super speed, but abusing your skills for money just seems... immoral. Immoral

to the Gods of Gaming. As I said, maybe it's my docile ways but by having competitive gaming and eSports, the real aim for gaming is forgotten about.

Thanks guys,  
**James**

It's all about perspective, right? Some people enjoy beating others down in competition, especially if they were like us and couldn't do too much football at school because they got a stitch after five minutes and had to vomit behind the shed. Anyway, what were we talking about? Oh yeah, eSports. It's good! Watching the best in the world play each other is no different to watching speed-runs or smashing through games on the hardest difficulty. It's just a different way to enjoy it.

# facebook

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**We take to our Facebook army made up of our nearest and dearest to ask...**



Throwing poo in *Duke Nukem Forever*. Sigh.



**Play**

What is your proudest gaming moment?

Like • Comment • Share • about an hour ago

**Jordan Capasso** Using a toilet in *Fallout 3*

**Mobeen Aftab** The ending to *Metal Gear Solid 2*

**Kelly Brady** Platinum in *Assassin's Creed 2*

**Andy Easton** Platinum on *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, that game was uber tough!

**Gabriella Tacchi** Acquiring a hat stack in *Team Fortress 2*! <3 I was so happy

**Martin MacKinnon** Throwing a poo in *Duke Nukem*

**Michael Russell** 100% on *GTA: Vice City* (and all I got was a lousy t-shirt)

**Chris Robb** Platinum on *Terminator Salvation*

**Steve Purchase** Winning the European Cup with Cwmbran Town on *Sensible World Of Soccer*

**Christy O'Toole** Beating level three of *Altered Beast*. That game is impossible!

**Mercury Rapids** Finishing *Red Dead Redemption* 100%. Getting off the beach in *Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault* was a relief as well.

YouTube

**YouTube**

Peep the latest trailers and hottest gaming clips at  
youtube.com/PlayMagUK



**TOKYO JUNGLE**  
RAW GAMEPLAY FOOTAGE



**GRAN TURISMO 5**  
PLAY COMMUNITY NIGHT



**REMEMBER ME**  
DIRECTOR COMMENTARY





# PLAY

NOW Gamer NETWORK

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No seriously, follow us. We give away games, we retweet stupid videos and we *will* talk to you. No seriously, we will. It's a miracle we manage to make a magazine each month



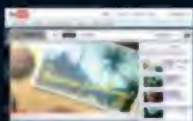
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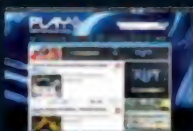
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### Play-Mag.co.uk

Opinion, analysis and hilarity can be found on our website [www.play-mag.co.uk](http://www.play-mag.co.uk) so join the debate, tell us why we're wrong and make us cry a bit



### Forum

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### Podcast

The **Play** team talks games every month  
[nowgamer.com/podcasts/nowgamer-podcasts/](http://nowgamer.com/podcasts/nowgamer-podcasts/)



Do you want to see Rare make *Perfect Dark* for PS3?

## SONY LOVES RARE

Why doesn't Sony just buy out Rare, who works for Microsoft? I've been reading other magazines and one ex-member of Rare isn't happy with Microsoft. Instead of developing *Killer Instinct 3*, they are developing kiddies' games for a younger audience. They are better working for Sony than Microsoft because working for Microsoft doesn't make sense. Games I would like to see Rare develop for PS Vita, PS3 and PS4:

*Killer Instinct*  
*Perfect Dark*  
*Kameo*  
*Blast Corps*  
*Conker*  
Kaz, please buy out Rare.

Kaz Hirai? Carlton Reid has spoken. Don't let him down.

Carlton Reid

## TROPHY WHORE

I feel so ashamed with myself as for the last two to three years I have been playing cheap 'n' nasty PS3 games just for the trophies! While buying but neglecting top rated games like *Mass Effect 2* and *3*, *Uncharted 3*, *Battlefield 3* and soon on *Battlefield 3* got played on Play's community night but only for two glorious hours, sob

sob. So I'm taking a leaf out of your book and making a change in my life, I will push the likes of *Dark Void*, *The Saboteur*, *Def Jam Rapstar* to the bottom of my gaming pile and bask in some triple-A action! Oo-er!

Phil Robinson

You say that Phil but you'll be back. You Trophy lot always go back. We know because WE'RE ONE OF YOU.

Phil Robinson has neglected *Mass Effect*. SHAME ON YOU.



# WIN LOTS OF BOOKS



Books bruv. You get me? That's what we might say if we hadn't read a book in our impoverished lives. Fortunately we did read books, therefore we are bastions of intelligence, watching the meatbag masses from the top of our ivory tower made purely from culture and class. Occasionally, we'd fire an arrow of hope into the masses. A gift, some call it. A curse, say others. Free books, say us, because publishers keep sending them in and we don't want to bloody look at them on our desk anymore.

### WHAT IS THE OFFICIAL NAME OF ANARCHY REIGNS IN JAPAN?

A) PUNCH ACTION GAME: NAKARU!! LET US GO TOGETHER B) DR. LUBE C) MAX ANARCHY

Pop your answer and address in an email to [play@imagine-publishing.co.uk](mailto:play@imagine-publishing.co.uk) with the subject header '[LIBELLOUS JOKE ABOUT ANDY HAS BEEN REMOVED]'. Closing date is 22 November 2012. The winner will be notified by email. Next month: more tat!



# twitter

YOU ASK PLAY  
www.twitter.com/PlayMag\_UK



We ask you to ask us questions on Twitter, and then you do, and then we ignore you on Twitter and answer them here. It's the perfect system!

**@OHNOITSJADE** Vita advice – 3G or just wifi and tether to iPhone? And what size memory card? Wi-Fi is fine. And 16GB minimum for memory card, ideally. It fills up pretty fast.

**@WDANKS** Do you think it would be difficult buying a Wii in France? Oui. OH WAIT WE SEE WHAT YOU DID THERE.

**@PAUL\_BOWLER** If the **Play** team featured in the cosplaying section of the mag, which video game character would you like to dress up as? Andy – The Arctic Avenger from Counter-Strike. Ryan – Diana Allers from *Mass Effect*. Ian – Barry Burton.

**@SUPERMARIOEX** WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO CRASH BANDICOOT!! (best question, I expect a new game in the post within 4 weeks). :) It's been passed around from developer to developer (Naughty Dog, Traveller's Tales, Radical Entertainment) and publisher to publisher (Sony, Vivendi, Sierra) and now rests dormant at High Impact Games under Activision's banner. Activision CEO Eric Hirshberg has spoken about wanting to bring him back, so we'll see.

**@\_CHASETHELIGHT** Who do you want to use the most in *All-Stars Battle Royale*? (assuming you're actually wanting to play it) Sir Dan FORTESQUE!

**@BIG\_MICKY\_LACE** In *Resident Evil 5*, were Chris Redfield's biceps a product of hard work or illegal substance abuse? Hard work. His local gym in Dartford had a special offer on, so he signed up and look at him today! And he got a free towel.

**@SANDYSTRACHAN** Why do you think SCEA killed support for MAG so quickly? Not releasing content, delaying content such as character slots. It likely wouldn't have sold as well as Sony wanted but the biggest problem would have been the actual studio itself, Zipper Interactive, closing down in March this year.

**@KRAYSHADY** What dya think to the thoughts that eventually consoles will die out + we'll be cloud gaming so PS will just be a sub service :) It'll be a while off yet, as the broadband infrastructure needs to be up to the task of supporting cloud gaming (plus the cultural shift to gamers accepting digital distribution will take a while). We're looking at maybe... ten years from now?

**@JOKMAN275** Bacon sandwich – red or brown? Brown.

**@ALKOGNIUZZ** Is Ryan's Wang a playable character in *PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale*? Ryan has been playing *Tekken* for so long now that his Wang is the hardest we've ever seen.

# PLAY

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## PLAY-MAG.CO.UK

# PES 2013 VS FIFA 13: THE BIG RESULT

**S**o this year we have a choice between two genuinely excellent football games for the first time in... well, ever. Back in the days when *Pro Evo* reigned supreme – the PS2 era, with *PES* through *PES 5* providing some true classics of the genre – *FIFA* was, not to put too fine a point on it, ass. It didn't play right, it added stupid little gimmicks in place of fixing fundamental flaws, it relied on adding things like celebrations over a decent passing system and it was only preferred by the public because of licensing and marketing spend. Then came this generation, and *PES* totally lost its footing, ending up arse-over-tit in a heap on the floor somewhere. The *FIFA* team took the competition's slip as its chance to make headway, with the vastly improved *FIFA 08* showing us promise. By *FIFA 09*, the EA Sports team had made something essential. Something that, for the first time in the series' history, played like an actual football game... *PES* was never terrible in this timeframe, but it just wasn't as good as EA's offering. It was lost, dawdling along with confused, choppy play and some truly atrocious online efforts. But it was slowly steadying itself. And now, as many have proclaimed this year, it's back. Personally, it's good for me to be able to enjoy *PES* again. I've missed you, old friend.







again would allow them to sit in the comfort of Activision's Capitol Hill headquarters to play videos that are changing gaming industry in the loyalty of veterans while millions of new fans. That's not work with it's hard to see where the franchise will end, the launch of the dedicated *War Liberation* as well as PS3 and DLC for Activision's *Call of Duty* it's gratifying to know that UB specifically gives PlayStation the best possible experience.

ACIII is essentially a reborn. Playing it feels like a 10mg of adrenaline directly into the series, an answer to how the series had sagged with less inspired *Revolutions*. Unleashed the new *Avril*! On scratch, which gives the play could than ever in make

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# PREVIEWS

The games that will shape the future of PlayStation



Niliin

RELEASE DATE: MAY

## Remember Me

Where did I put those damn keys?

PS3

Five people. Every screenshot you see on this page, the Memory Remix trailer you see on our DVD, the big-budget game that's now proudly nestling under Capcom's banner started with just five people, one apartment and one idea. "That's practically the same number of people that there are in this room," says *Remember Me*'s creative director Jean-Maxime Moris, gesturing at the cold, unglamorous room we're using for the interview.

Dontnod, the developer behind *Remember Me*, has since grown to 95 people and Moris says that the intriguing sci-fi title has only been in 'real production' for the past two years. Which brings us to now. Playing on the growing trend (and concern) of social media's influence, *Remember Me* is a third-person action adventure based around main character's Niliin and her ability to remix memories.

"It's taken a lot of prototyping and iteration to get right," explains Moris. "Memory remix is the ability Niliin has to dive into your memories, change just a few details and then come out of your memory to see the butterfly effect on your personality and game world."

The example shown off when *Remember Me* was first announced saw Niliin diving into the memories of a drunk Frank Forlan, when he's having an argument with his wife. We see that by

altering a few things in Frank's memory, we can cause a chain reaction that causes him to kill his wife by accident. When Niliin then leaves his mind, Frank's memory has been changed so he believes himself to have killed his wife. Racked with guilt, he takes his own life by shooting himself just before his very much alive wife walks in and screams.

But we found out more about how this core mechanic really works. For starters, you can try indefinitely until you get it right. You have the power to fast-forward and rewind the memory at will, interacting with different elements of the environment until you get the outcome you're after. For example, if you move the bottle in Frank's way he'll trip but if you don't move the table, he'll actually fall and hit his head on the table. Interesting but not the outcome you want.

There's only one outcome per scene but you can find out more about the story and even create some funny scenes if you activate the right chain of events. Expect this to be a game with rich backstory, easter eggs and Trophies tucked away in the dense memories of the minds you hack into. One change from the reveal

demo to the final version is that the interactive elements won't immediately be flagged up for you. You have to find them yourself. Another change that's been made? Niliin's look.

"So basically we felt that we are a cyberpunk game and cyberpunk is about extrapolating today's trends into the future and we felt she was too disconnected from where we are today," explained Moris. "She looked a little too much like she came out of... games like *Mass Effect*, for example, which are set way into the future. So that's why we brought back jeans, the leather jacket, that kind of stuff. If you look at the new design, it looks like she could be from today but there's something very futuristic about her as well."

We're promised more innovations – "I can't tell you because Capcom would kill me" said Moris, laughing – and we've also seen how the combat works. Niliin has a power wheel with a selection of powers available. She can smash memories out of the minds of guards, accompanied by a gorgeous, pixelated glittering effect. There's also a smart bomb-style move, where Niliin pounds the ground and

the guards are sent flying. Using crude comparisons, it's a mix of *Mass Effect*'s power wheel and *Batman*'s one-man-at-a-time system, with Niliin's own elegance and the near-futuristic setting helping *Remember Me* find its own identity.

So what else to expect from *Remember Me*? Mostly, how it all fits together. We thought there was a stealth section but that was rubbished by Moris.

"I wouldn't call it stealth because that's a very dangerous word to say in this industry! These sections are called patrol puzzle. It's about avoiding the security drones that patrol the city."

That still leaves the memory remixing, the platforming, the combat and the other innovations Dontnod can actually tell us about once Capcom lifts the threat of death. It's proof that fresh, innovative IP can not only thrive as the sun begins to set on a console generation but also in a world teeming with *Call Of Duty* impersonators. Here's hoping it works out for Dontnod. >

If you can speak French like us, you'll have no problem navigating *Remember Me*'s official site: [dont-nod.com](http://dont-nod.com). Combien pour les tomates? Ou est le piscine? Allez les Bleus!

### WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

Platforming!

Combat!

Action!

Remixing people's memories to affect their actions, personalities and circumstances. This one took a bit more explaining.

### READ ME

Action, adventure, memory remixing, combat and a whiff of puzzle elements too. There's a lot going on and the key to success will be how it all comes together.

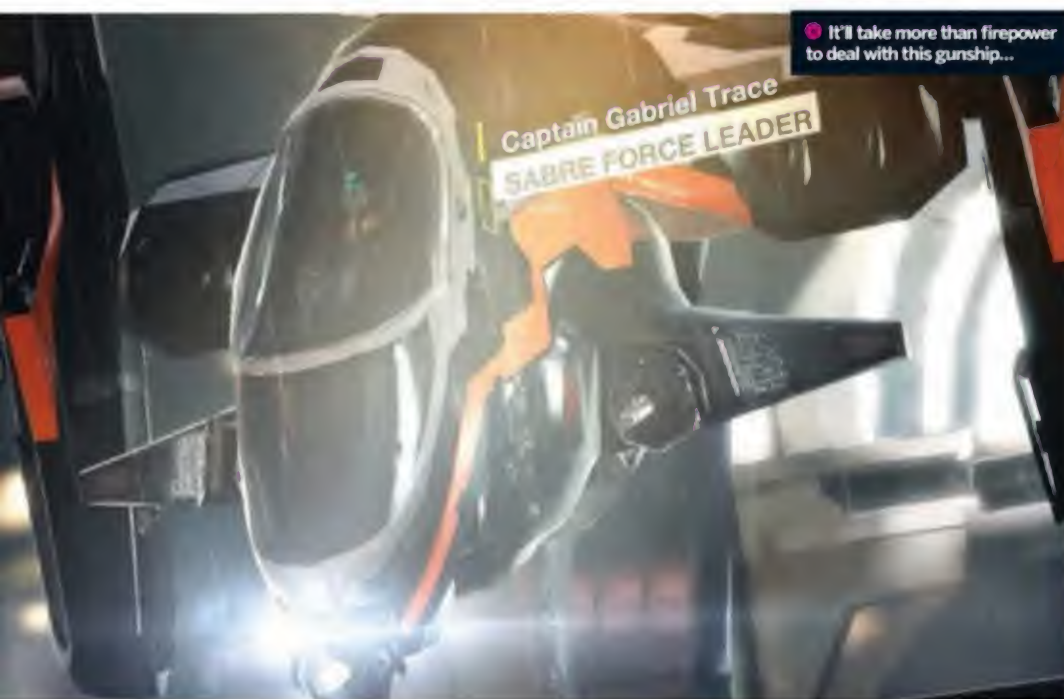




● Combat has the same 'taking turns' system of the *Arkham* titles.



● Platforming is a substantial part of *Remember Me's* gameplay mix.



● It'll take more than firepower to deal with this gunship...

## REMEMBER ME REMINDS US OF...



### MIRROR'S EDGE

#### PLATFORMING ACTION-ADVENTURE

Short-haired heroines aren't a new thing, as hair is one of the harder things in gaming to get right, but the mix of quick platforming and sharp, punchy action sequences reminds us of DICE's innovative project. Will it have the same frustrating difficulty spikes though?



### DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION

#### SCI-FI SETTING

It might not have the best visuals from a technical real-time bump-mapping 80 million polygons angle but its aesthetics? Its art? Its world? Incredible. *Remember Me* isn't as far removed from today as *Deus Ex* is but there are echoes of Square-Enix's shooter here.



### INCEPTION

#### PLAYING WITH MEMORIES

We're told by Jean-Maxime Moris that Dontnod came up with the idea of manipulating memories for *Remember Me* before *Inception* hit cinemas. It'll be interesting to see how often the two are compared, given that few recent movies or games have explored the idea in depth.



### ONI

#### BECAUSE ANDY SAID SO

"It looks like *Oni*!" chirped our designer looking at the screenshots, before going back to buying balaclavas on Amazon. He's not wrong. There's a sparse feel to the interiors (despite being dense with detail) and there's no denying the shared setting of close-range combat in a sci-fi world.



### RED FACTION 2

#### BATTLES AGAINST GUNSHIPS

Yes, whenever we see a gunship shooting through windows, we're always reminded of *Red Faction 2*. It's in our blood. It's just one battle in *Remember Me* but anything that reminds us of *Red Faction*, even that awful sequel, definitely qualifies as a Good Thing.



## YOU DISCOVER THERE'S FAR MORE TO THE COMBAT THAN YOU ORIGINALLY THOUGHT



**JEAN-MAXIME MORIS**

Creative director, Dontnod

What do you get when you combine Facebook, alcohol and a room with five people? **Play's** imagination runs wild before learning the answer...

### How did *Remember Me* begin?

Well... I was born on 6 March [laughs]. I was working at Ubisoft in 2007 and we wanted to create our own company with a couple of colleagues and friends. We started Dontnod and we wanted to do a cyberpunk game in the future that was extrapolating some trends from today and the future. We didn't want it to be about cold, physical technology. Many other cyberpunk games do that and that's fine for them but we wanted to do something different.

We looked at what we could work on, the kind of themes we had, and social networks

emerged and the questions that they raise. The way we have all uploaded entire pieces of personalities onto social networks and we don't really care about what's being done with the data because it's cool to be on Facebook, it's cool to be on Twitter, it's cool to fool around with my smartphone all the time [laughs]. If you take that trend and throw it into the future, this is just our memories being uploaded directly into the network and being analysed to see what we like, what we dislike, what our beliefs are, etc. So that's the very high-level start of it.

It slowly came down to that recipe of the female lead, looking at the more emotional side of humans in the future, the female lead is a no-brainer, however hard it would be to sell to publishers. There was also this one idea that tickled the back of my mind that one idea that can change the world. [Mock anger] And I know it's been done in *Inception* since but when we started it, *Inception* had not come out, okay?

### There goes my next question.

[laughs] I wanted a multilayered game with different entry points and at the core I wanted it to be sci-fi action thriller that you can immediately go "Oh, I want to play that, that looks cool." And I wanted to have that layer of what we just talked about, social networks. And then that top-layer of one idea that can change the world.

**There are a lot of different elements such as running, combat, puzzle elements, remixing memories, the helicopter battle – how do you get all that to mesh together to feel like a single game?**

It's very difficult. But if you look at recent third-person action-adventure, you have to have variety. Because they have to tell a story. Because an interesting story has variation to it and we're trying to tell that

story through gameplay, so there has to be variation of the gameplay. But at the same time, it has to be balanced and not feel like a collection of mini-games so it is tough and sometimes there are hard choices to make, but you'll get to decide in a couple of months if we managed to do it or not.

### Given the concept of *Remember Me* isn't immediately obvious, how nervous were you when showing it off to the world for the first time?

I have a tendency to avoid being nervous by simply working as hard as I can so that if I get up on stage and lightning strikes or I faint, at least I did all I could do [laughs] It was the product of hard work – hard, *hard* work – I had my speech for Gamescom rewritten 30 or 35 times. I'm not kidding! I had not drunk a single drop of alcohol in the previous ten days because I wanted to be very healthy, so in a way I was not nervous. I was nervous when I saw all the cameras and 250 people in front of me but within ten seconds I was enjoying it. And having the Capcom logo behind me, I was like "F\*\*k yeah! This is it."

Of course you're afraid of showing it to people because you're like, what are they going to say? But I was so confident I just didn't ask myself the question at that point. But it could have failed! [Laughs] It could have dramatically failed and we wouldn't be here today.

### And then we assume you had some alcohol after that?

I did! Like in the next ten minutes. I had a rough four days of Gamescom after that!

### What did you take away from the reaction from the press and forums?

First of all, I'm extremely happy with the overall feedback we've gotten. We're staying



Slow-mo moments punctuate the platforming action.





● It's a metallic bee! Man! Thing. Erm... we don't know. Hack its memory!



● Nilin can use her powers to solve simple platforming puzzles.



● Climb up the side, punch the pilot in the cock, fly home. All done!

focused because we're nearing critical milestones in the project. It was like a ten-second break. "Oh this is cool, we're getting a good reception!" And then straight back on the computer and going at it again [laughs].

The feedback was, first of all, that we pleased a lot of people. And then there were some things where there was criticism and some things that kept coming back at us a lot. We looked at how we could address them. I think that's the most honest way to look at things.

It's a tough balance to reach between keeping your ears closed or opening them too much. Especially in videogames, because we must be the only entertainment industry in the world that is driven by shows to showcase a product that hasn't been finished yet. So it's difficult.

#### Can you give one example of what has been changed?

[Long pause] We're going to change some of the pacing in regard to the way Edge and Nilin talk to each other. To really make it more bouncy between the two. And we've changed some of the dialogue as well, because we

had a lot of feedback on the dialogue. But overall, the vision remains consistent.

#### What in your opinion is the one thing that will stand out the most?

You have that thing in **gamesTM**: what you get after ten minutes, half an hour, so you could go like that. But the immediate grasp is Nilin, universe, memory remix, combat. And then we take those four and really make them evolve through the entire game. It's going to be really cool.

#### Just for the sake of that idea then, what would you say after ten minutes, half-an-hour, then an hour? Which is actually quite quick in terms of a game.

Yeah. Ten minutes... you've discovered Nilin in the universe and you have no idea what's going on in there because there's crazy stuff happening. 30 minutes, you've discovered the combat is accessible and cool and you have this amazing power of remixing people's memories. One hour, you discover there's a lot more to the combat than you originally thought there was but I can't talk about that right now! But it's coming.

#### Now the most important question. What the flippin' 'eck does Dontnod mean?

[Laughs] Dontnod is the product of very drunk brains in a Parisian restaurant. It's a palindrome, it reads forwards and backwards. We didn't want to do things in the same way that other people were doing them. We didn't want to nod to someone. Even if we're working with a publisher, as we are right now, sometimes it's hard to not nod, but that's the meaning behind Dontnod.





# PREVIEW

RELEASE DATE: MARCH 2013

## South Park: The Stick Of Truth

**PS3** Oh my god, a reference from 1997! You bastards!

### WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It looks exactly like the show. Like, exactly.
- It sounds exactly like the show. Like, exactly.
- It's voiced by the actors from the show. Like, yeah.
- It's written by Matt and Trey. Like, double yeah.

South Park: The Stick Of Truth is being developed by Obsidian Entertainment. Check out [www.stickoftruth.com](http://www.stickoftruth.com) for more details.



### READ ME

It seems that, after all the controversy surrounding it, the 'Jew' class that could be chosen by the player has been dropped. We present this without comment.

### Beard? No beard?

One element we're glad of is the ability to customise the new kid, who players take on the adventure through *The Stick Of Truth*. It's simple, but as we saw in the likes of previous Obsidian titles like *Alpha Protocol*, the ability to dress up your main character in countless different ways – and slap beards on them – is great. It's just a little touch in the grand scheme of things, but one that shows the developer is in touch with the features that make RPG experiences that bit more endearing. And beardy.



### Well lookey here

We thought we were watching a cut-scene in our demo of *The Stick Of Truth*. We figured it was just another bit of video slapped into the game to make it look authentic. Turns out it was the game looking exactly like the TV show does. It isn't the most intricately animated show around, granted, so you could argue it's not the most difficult thing to pull off. But for authenticity you really can't get much better than how this looks. There's even the craft paper textured look to surfaces.



### WE DIDN'T LISTEN!

*The Stick Of Truth* is fully voiced by the actors from the show, which mainly means Matt Stone and Trey Parker. What's that? Why, it's a Very Good Thing, of course. This means no stupid soundalikes, no half-baked performances and lots of Cartman sounding just as conceited and arrogant as always (oh, and lots of Butters sounding like Butters, which is always hilarious). In the space of a few seconds we had already been made to guffaw like idiots when a familiar-sounding father berated the player character new kid. Ah, familiarity.





## ✓ Respecting authoritaaah

What is an RPG without combat? Well, still an RPG. Just one without combat. Anyway, *South Park* has combat, as you would expect, and it plays like the *Paper Mario* games you might have dabbled in on those dirty Nintendo consoles. For the uninitiated, this equates to turn-based fights with an element of timing involved – hit buttons at the right time to receive boosts to attack or defence. It's a simple-looking system but, if experience is anything to go by, one that helps combat feel fresh for hours on end.

## ✗ Mass appeal? Hmm

*South Park* is not a runaway, constant success of a huge magnitude. It doesn't pull in tens of millions of viewers. A lot of people only seem to remember it as it was in 1997-2000. Gamers don't hold Obsidian in the highest of esteem thanks to the studio's consistently buggy releases. All of this comes together into one big package of risk for an already-struggling THQ. We have faith the studios working together will produce something good; we don't have faith it will do incredibly well in the wild. Which would be a huge shame.

## ✓ Writers' room

As if to keep up this theme of Ultimate Accuracy, *The Stick Of Truth* is also written by *South Park*'s creators, Stone and Parker. This means you're presented with a knowing, very much tongue-in-cheek take on the traditional RPG and some quality humour throughout. We don't want to sound too horribly patronising to the game writers out there, but these guys have been doing it a long time, they like their games and they've had a big involvement in development. What this leads to is *The Rock Of Insanity*, mainly. Which is brilliant.

## ✓ Playing the game

The actual game isn't anything you haven't seen before, unless, that is, you've never played an RPG in your life. If you have, you'll recognise the game mechanics as rather familiar – comfortable, even. If you haven't but are a fan of *South Park*, you might be a bit confused by the chance to wander around the whole of the town (mapped out properly for the first time ever! Feature! Yeah!), tapping X to interact with characters and seeing shining gold locks on most doors you walk past. You might not, though.





RELEASE DATE: 23 NOVEMBER

# PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale

We hate this idea less with each passing week

**PS3** It was always going to be a hard sell to the army of cynical gamers that make up the ranks of PS3 and Vita owners – an ensemble cast of PlayStation (and multiformat) characters past and present coming together in a clash of the *Smash Brothers* clones. Don't the people just want *Call Of Duty* and nothing else?

Well, from reaction to the hands-on time people have had with the game, it seems like the people might actually want more than just *COD*. They might want what is looking to be a tightly-controlling, over-the-top and fun fighting game. Guess which *PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale* we're talking about.

But it's the characters that are making the game so captivating right now – we're always wanting to know who's being announced next. By the time we're out on the shelves you might well have had more announcements from Sony, but the main 20-character roster at the time of writing has been finalised.

*Heavenly Sword*, the beautiful but lacking early PS3 title, is represented through Nariko. Makes sense, and

she's a good fit. Sucker Punch's *inFamous* brings Evil Cole to the battle (royale), which we're more than happy about because... well, screw good Cole. He's boring. *Metal Gear Solid* gets its representation through everyone's favourite gaming character, the truest hero we've ever seen in videogames and the entire reason **Play** magazine wakes up in the morning: Raiden. Wait, what? Ah well, at least it's cybernetic Raiden and not the rubbish version from *MGS2*. Then, easily best of all, is *MediEvil*'s representation in the shape of Sir Daniel Fortesque. We're aware his inclusion may be lost on some of the more recent arrivals to PlayStation... umm... Land... so we'll just demand you go and buy *MediEvil* on PSN right now. Because it's great.

Of course you've still got *Killzone*'s Colonel Radec, *Twisted Metal*'s Sweet Tooth, *Ape Escape*'s Spike and *DmC*'s Dante – as well as a fair few other more (and less) obvious faces – and each character seems to be handling pretty well. Control is responsive and deliberate, without that floaty, disconnected feel you might get in other multiplayer



## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- When people play it they aren't immediately weeping with Sudden Onset Badness.
- It's not got everyone we want, but it's got some cool characters.
- Meaning it may well turn out to be quite good.
- PaRappa. That is all.





brawlers we might have mentioned earlier that live on Nintendo machines and we don't want to mention them by name again.

Is this the part where we mention *PaRappa The Rapper's* creator, Rodney Greenblat, has spoken out against the rapping, beanie-sporting pooch's use of weapons in the game? Seems like a natural segue to make here. But we'll never complain about *PaRappa* being in a game, so there.

One of the big elements Sony is keen to push (aside from *PaRappa*, natch) is the cross-buy and cross-play elements *PS All-Stars* incorporates. If you buy the game on PS3, you get a PS Vita download of the full game for free. You can also play the game on either machine against others, meaning you can take the Fat Princess-slapping on the bus with you, if you're *that* kind of weird. This is clearly one of Sony's main titles to test out the popularity and functionality of its cross systems, so the entire project's success or failure might rest heavily on the shoulders of *Battle Royale*. Maybe.

It's still to be seen just how much of an experience – how deep, how good – *PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale* can offer. We still have our reservations about it, and it still doesn't seem to be getting a huge section of PS3 and Vita owners excited. But the more we see of it, the more it gets played, the more we're willing to reconsider our stance: there are no guarantees, but it might actually be a damn good game.

**PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale** is being developed by SuperBot Entertainment, SCE Santa Monica Studio and Bluepoint Games (on Vita). Check out [www.playstationallstarsbattleroyale.com](http://www.playstationallstarsbattleroyale.com) for more details.

## READ ME

*PS All-Stars Battle Royale* was originally meant to be developed by Naughty Dog, whose fighting game experience stretches back to *Way Of The Warrior* on 3DO. Hmm.



## STAGING GROUNDS

Because where you're punching Nathan Drake matters

IT'S NOT JUST the characters ripped out of their usual environments and slapped into flashy boxes in order to wallop ten bells of dung out of each other: the environments themselves have also been transposed, in order to take on the role of said flashy boxes. There are recreations of the likes of *God Of War's* Hydra, an appearance from Jason Donovan's best role as Buzz, a course from *Everybody's Golf* and – obviously the best – Chop Chop Master Onion Head's dojo from *PaRappa The Rapper*. No word if it'll have the casino from his mind, though. It's not going to change how you play too much, but it's a nice touch all the same.







RELEASE DATE: MARCH 2013

## Fuse

Insomniac shows it isn't over, as *Overstrike* is reborn

PS3

It was once a colourful, quirky and rather tongue-in-cheek take on the squad-based shooter known as *Overstrike*. It's now a less-colourful, straight-faced take on the squad-based shooter known as *Fuse*. What a difference a year makes, eh? The presentational style may have changed somewhat, but the underlying concepts that backed up *Overstrike* remain in *Fuse*: alien-powered weaponry and squad mechanics that drag what would otherwise be an uninspiring shootalong into the realms of 'a bit more interesting'. We have confidence in the ability of Insomniac and – with our initial unimpressed looks at *Resistance 3* proved wrong by the excellent finished product – we're more than willing to give the studio the benefit of the doubt. Plus, let's be honest, *Overstrike* didn't ever look *that* funny anyway.

### WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Tight, responsive mechanics make it fun to play.
- Interesting weaponry and skills distract from the less-interesting ones.
- It's less colourful than before. We do hate colour.
- Insomniac is a skilled developer: we trust it.

### READ ME

*Fuse* is the first time Insomniac is making a game for an IP it owns fully, unlike the *Ratchet & Clank* or *Spyro* series.

*Fuse* is being developed by Insomniac Games. Check out [www.insomniacgames.com/games/fuse/](http://www.insomniacgames.com/games/fuse/) for more details.



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### WHO ARE YA?

Dalton, Naya, Jacob and Izzy. Not a bunch of preppy kids wearing Jack Wills hoodies, but the four folks you'll be taking control of in *Fuse*, each with their own abilities and special weaponry. Dalton is the tank, offering energy shields and kinetic blasts. Jacob is your sniper, pinning enemies to the wall with his crossbow or melting

them with a mercury shot. Naya can turn invisible or, if you like, shoot enemies with her gun that causes singularities to form on their faces. Then there's Izzy, whose weapon the shattergun freezes bunches of enemies, allowing you to shatter them. It's a mix that will lead to both teamwork and shenanigans, of that there's little doubt.

### OVERSTRIKE

Pics from the past



● This robot is far too exciting. MAKE IT DULLER.

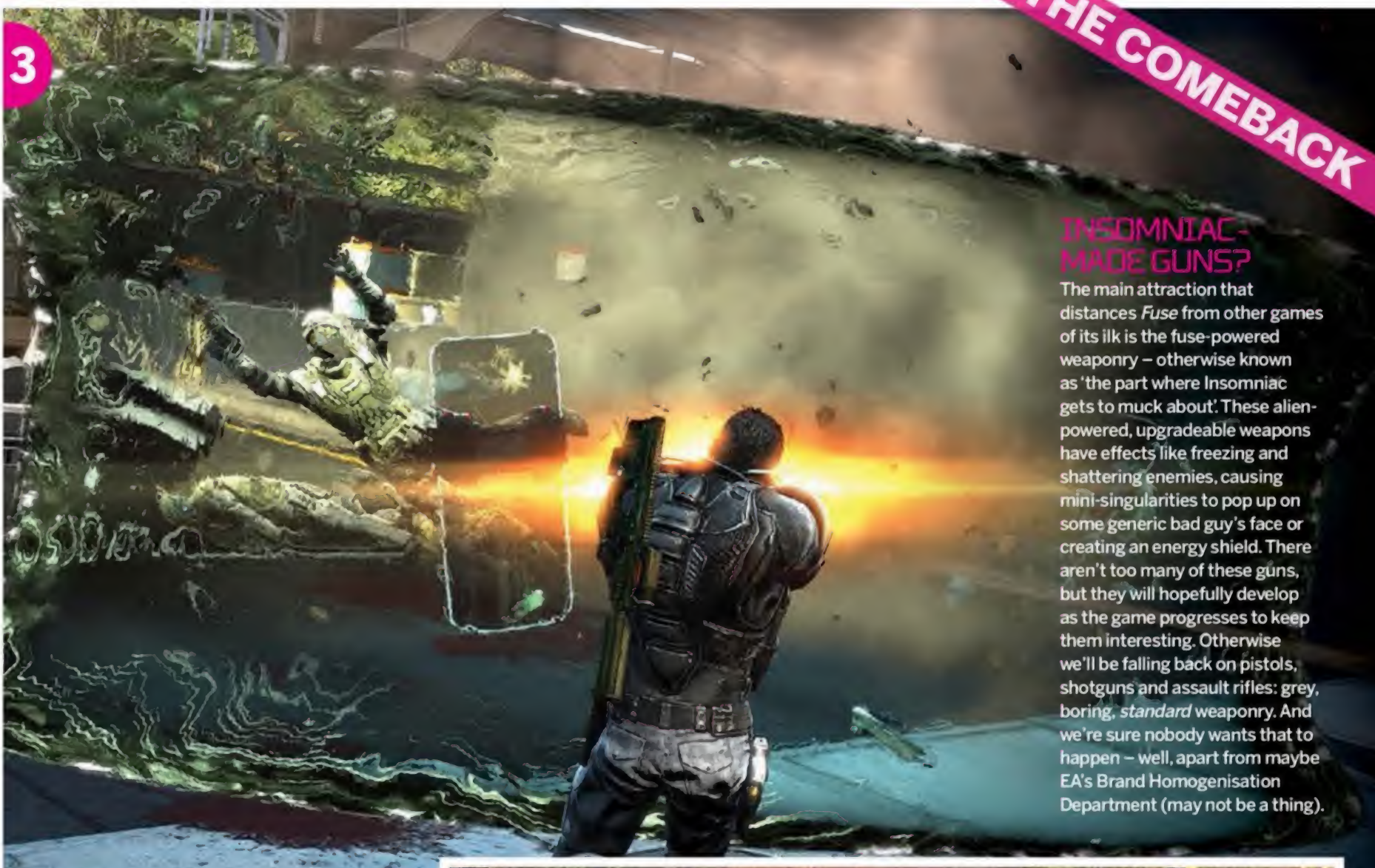


● That energy shield is too bright. MAKE IT DARKER.



● She has too many freckles and silly shades. MAKE HER MORE MILITARY-Y.





## INSOMNIAC-MADE GUNS?

The main attraction that distances *Fuse* from other games of its ilk is the fuse-powered weaponry – otherwise known as ‘the part where Insomniac gets to muck about’. These alien-powered, upgradeable weapons have effects like freezing and shattering enemies, causing mini-singularities to pop up on some generic bad guy’s face or creating an energy shield. There aren’t too many of these guns, but they will hopefully develop as the game progresses to keep them interesting. Otherwise we’ll be falling back on pistols, shotguns and assault rifles: grey, boring, *standard* weaponry. And we’re sure nobody wants that to happen – well, apart from maybe EA’s Brand Homogenisation Department (may not be a thing).

## CHEST-HIGH WALLS

If you’ve played a third-person, cover-based shooter then you know 90 per cent of what to expect from *Fuse*: run and gun, hide behind a wall, blind fire, headshots, rinse and repeat. That’s not the most inspiring of statements to make, sorry. But there are elements to mix it up and keep it that bit more interesting than it might otherwise have been, mostly coming from the combination of the team of four characters and the fuse weapons. There’s a feel of *Borderlands* to *Fuse* too, with the team of four players working together and combining elemental/fuse effects to good... effect. Here’s hoping it does enough to keep us interested for a long time.

4



## FOR FOUR

One of the big draws of *Fuse* is the four-person team, which does of course mean the chance to participate in some of that fine four-player co-operative play we all love so very much. Obviously the experience will be a much richer one if you bring along friends, but Insomniac isn’t forgetting about the friendless masses out there, allowing players to switch the character they’re controlling at certain points during play. Bored of freezing and shattering? Move to shielding and tanking. Or, you know, the other ones. It doesn’t exactly make us think four-player is anything other than the way to play the game, but at least you can keep it more interesting when playing on your own.





RELEASE DATE: TBC 2013

# Puppeteer

The puppet master ("game director") Gavin Moore reveals all

PS3

*Puppeteer* is a platformer where players use a multitude of different heads to imbue the player character with different powers. It's an interesting idea, it looks fantastic, and we wanted to know more – so we asked the game director at SCE Japan Studio, Gavin Moore, to tell us. He did.

The idea for *Puppeteer* comes from classic platformers, plain and simple: "I'm a great lover of original platform gaming, from way back," Moore says. "I love platform games. I've played most of them. So I really wanted to incorporate that sense of a language. Everybody knows that you run, and jump. It's our language; like the film language of camera. It's our gaming language. So it's very easy to pick up and play, because you've done it. But then

it's full of all this magical stuff that keeps you sat in your seat."

Being a Brit working in a Japanese studio could have presented some unique hurdles. Not so, according to Moore: "Japanese game creators are really imaginative, and when you let them have the freedom to be imaginative they go wild, crazy, which I love personally, so I'll draw something and do something and I'll say 'Let's make this', and someone will say 'Hold on a second' and draw over the top of it or whatever and I'll say 'Awesome, let's do that'. So those cultural Eastern and Western sensibilities really mesh well, I think."

*Puppeteer* is quite a striking game from a graphical perspective – basically, it looks well nice, like – and Moore keenly tells us why this matters. "The visuals are really

Trine immediately came to mind here – not a bad thing.



important because that's my background. That's why I started this, and it's what I love doing." He goes on: "It's very poppy, and it's very bright and colourful. It's very dark at the beginning, in the first act, but as you start to escape it takes you into this really colourful, amazing world."

Safe to say, this isn't the sort of game you'd see coming from many other major publishers, as Moore gleefully points out: "[Sony is] willing to give us the creative freedom to explore and come up with something new." Let's hope it's something new worth playing.

*Puppeteer* is being developed by Japan Studio. Check out <http://bit.ly/NAUC1b> for more details.



## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Head-changing, ability-changing, yeah.
- It sure looks purdy.
- Inspired by classic platformers of yesteryear.
- A mesh of eastern and western design principles is always good, right? Right?

## READ ME

*Puppeteer* will have a multiplayer mode, apparently, but we weren't told about it at the time of speaking to Moore. Shame.

## MOVETACULAR

Obligatory boxouts about obligatory control schemes

*PUPPETEER DOES SEEM* like the sort of game we'd see Move control slapped all over, but it looks like it isn't... wait... "Traditional platform gaming is always done with a controller and that's what we base most of our stuff on... But we will be announcing stuff in the future about other hardware that Sony has." Ah, no, that's us told.





❗ This is not a street race. We can tell (lack of streets).

## GRIDDLING

Cooking up those online rivalries

MULTIPLAYER IS, NATURALLY, a big focus for *GRID 2* and Codemasters' RaceNet framework will back up the online world. The experience will be separate from the offline mode and offer progression and the ability to, obviously, take on opponents from around the world. And probably lose to them, unless you're as excellent at games as we are.



RELEASE DATE: SUMMER 2013

# GRID 2

Going off it. The grid, that is. We're hilarious! Sigh

PS3

We're not sure about you, but here in the **Play** lair we tend to work under one basic assumption when it comes to driving games: the in-car view is popular. Sure, nobody we know uses it and it's actually more of a gimmick than it is really useful, tending to be something that shows off the visuals rather than something that helps you play the game better. But it has to be popular, because we assumed as much.

Turns out assumptions are the mother of all cock-ups, as Codemasters Racing has revealed. The in-car cockpit view has been entirely removed from *GRID 2*, sequel to the 85%-scoring *Race Driver: GRID*. Why? Because a mere five per cent of players actually used it with any regularity, as revealed through the studio's 'enormous amount' of telemetry data. The cockpit view is dead, long live the other views.

Odd that this seems to be such an important point then, seeing as

so few people actually cared. But there is a game hiding behind all of the nonsense and complaining, and it's a sequel that many of us have been quietly hoping for over the last few years.

*GRID 2* offers street racing in locales the world over, road racing for more open challenges and track racing for the traditional driving game experience. It's backed up by an aggressive, learning AI system called the Driver Ability System – basically the computer pays attention to how you drive and pays you back in kind.

Then there's the other buzzword feature in the shape of 'TrueFeel' handling (yes, really), which is something about making it feel like you're actually driving. In other words: a good handling system. Early reports are that it's tactile, responsive and – most importantly – fun to play. We're looking forward to *GRID 2*.

**GRID 2** is being developed by Codemasters Racing. Check out [www.gridgame.com](http://www.gridgame.com) for more details.



❗ Normally we'd go 'Oh, it won't look this good' but Codies does pump out some lookers.



❗ It won't have *GTS*'s number of cars, but it'll have a lot of detail in those included.

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ Multiple different forms of racing to take part in.
- ❑ Online supports progression, thus keeping you playing.
- ❑ Adaptive AI for more of a challenge offline.
- ❑ It's not the freshest any more, but the EGO engine is still excellent.

## READ ME

The original game's online servers were shut down in June 2011. If Codemasters uses an online pass, will *GRID 2* have online services lasting more than three years? We shall see.



# PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2012 (JAPAN)

## Yakuza 5

Sega kills its own history

**PS3** Pretend *Yakuza: Dead Souls* doesn't exist. Go on. You know what we're talking about, right? *Yakuza: Dead Souls*? Which took the RPG-lite action and exploration of *Yakuza* and decided to throw in zombies and guns? Oh. Seems most people didn't know it existed. Oh dear. This is awkward. Thanks for ruining our intro. We were going to make a joke about how you should forget it exists because Sega has done, trampling all over it by making *Yakuza 5* the 'official' sequel to *Yakuza 4*, but we won't bother now. Nice one.

As for *Yakuza 5*, Sega has realised the importance of the series and has thrown some weight behind making this feel like a proper sequel rather than a new chapter in the storyline. Improvements to controls and making the switch between the game's different playing styles feel more natural are expected. A new graphics engine and inclusion of some big name retro games inside are not. So erase *Dead Souls* from your mind and look at what we can tell you about the brand new *Yakuza*...

### WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- All four games have been great (we're ignoring *Dead Souls*).
- It's the closest we'll ever get to *Shenmue III* (including *Dead Souls*).
- Brilliant mix of action, RPG, exploration and adventure (bar *Dead Souls*).
- Engaging characters with intriguing storylines (except *Dead Souls*).

### READ ME

Set after the events of *Yakuza 4*, hero Kazuma Kiryu has become a taxi driver (!) while the impending death of a clan leader means an all out war is on the horizon.



It hasn't been confirmed for a Western release yet but if you want more details on the *Yakuza* series, follow [sega.com](http://sega.com)

### ANOTHER REBOOT

*Yakuza* games have been cooked up with a one-year development time, an unusually quick turnaround in the games industry. For *Yakuza 5*, Sega is doubling that development time and billing this entry as a reboot of the series of sorts, being built on a new graphics engine and being something of a fresh start for the developers. Perhaps this is what the series needs. As much as we love the *Yakuza* games (apart from *Dead Souls*), seeing the same city, the same animations, the same old stuff is wearing thin. As an added objective, the *Yakuza* team want this one to stand out as having the best scripts and scenarios in the series to date.

### NEW DOG, NEW TRICKS Show what you've learned



● Fukuoka is famous for having green spaces in its dense metropolis.



● Nagoya is the largest city in the Chubu region of Japan.



● Osaka has historically been the commercial centre of Japan.



2

## VIRTUA FIGHTER 2

There are games inside *Yakuza 5*! *Taiko no Tatsujin* (known as *Drum Master* on our shores) and *Virtua Fighter 2*, which will actually have an offline mode for two players if you download DLC to enable you to do so, are the confirmed titles so far. They will pop up in *Yakuza 5*'s in-game arcades so presumably, there's scope for more retro games to be included too. All it needs is Xzibit to pop up toasty style with a "Yo dawg, we heard you like games so we put a game inside your game" and we're set. Mini-games so far include Ramen Shop, Snowball Fight and Chicken Race.



3

## YAKUZA DOES GTA

Kamurocho will return, so those who have the layout of the fictional city burned in their brains will still know where to find the square, the batting cage, the massage parlours and so on. Which is probably just as well because it's not like that's knowledge we can pass onto our grandkids one day. So hurrah for validating our useless knowledge! Kamurocho will be bolstered by four new distinct locales. There will be Soutenbori, Tsukimino, Kineicho and Nagasugai, which are based on interpretations of real Japanese cities of Osaka, Sapporo, major port Nagoya and the spacious Fukuoka. It has been described by the team as the *Yakuza* equivalent of *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*. We beg to differ, unless we're allowed to ride through Kamurocho on a bike while Public Enemy plays in the background.

## FIVE ALIVE

4

For the first time, *Yakuza 5* will feature five protagonists. It's not really that exciting but it's probably something Sega's marketing department will shout about when it eventually meanders its way to our shores, so GET USED TO IT. Anyway, the main new addition is Haruka, who has gone from helpless child you had to save in the earlier *Yakuza* games to playable character in her own right. Can she fight? Has she simply shifted from helpless character to helpless avatar you guide through awkward stealth situations? We shall see. Kazuma, Shun and Taiga return while new character Tatsuo Shinada round off the cast.





# PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: 23 NOVEMBER

It's not quite this nice-looking in-game, but it isn't exactly ugly.

## Hitman: Absolution

47's back to hit men (women too, but not like in that trailer)



Let this be a lesson to all marketing teams the world over – the sort who only think about attracting people to a series who have never played it before: start with the game itself. Yes, there is a huge collection of existing fans of the *Hitman* series who don't have to be attracted to *Absolution* with flashy CG trailers and fetishistic violence against women, but they still need to be shown *something*. They still need to be shown that this is the *Hitman* they know and love, otherwise – like has happened – people will get confused, worried and will write off *Hitman: Absolution* before it's even had a chance.

Then, when we finally do get to play the game for any real period of time, *Absolution* reveals itself to be... well, it's *Hitman*. We could have avoided a hell of a lot of soul-searching and confusion if those in charge of the information had just shown us this months ago – and it could have stopped a fair few people from writing off the latest entry to the decade-old series altogether.

Beyond the hand-holding of the tutorial level, this is the *Hitman* we wanted it to be: big, beautiful, open and free for players to make it up as they go along. You need to kill that guy, right? Well you should probably watch the path he takes, work out a time to strike and try and make sure there's nobody around... wait he's in front of a rather deep hole push him *push him*. Bam, job done. Made up on the fly: a thousand times more satisfying than anything pre-prescribed could ever be.

But there are changes – elements added by the team at IO to bring *Absolution* into the modern age, away from the rather slapdash presentation of past efforts. Now instead of having to guess absolutely everything you can do or be rewarded for, the game offers a list of goals for you to complete. It's impossible to do all of them in a single run – even in a few runs. Admittedly it does take some of the joy out of discovering ways to off your targets (not that it tells you exactly how to do it, though subtle clues can be a dead giveaway), but rather than simplifying things to a ruinous degree, they actually work as a way to encourage you to replay. You've seen the stash of cocaine, you want to know what you can do with it to kill the Chinatown bigwig you've been sent in to eliminate. The fact you can unlock a higher score and, as a result, better abilities for Agent 47 (weapons handling, movement speed, ability to use less instinct etc) gives the right kind of impetus to play and play and play again.

Did we mention instinct? We did mention instinct. It's one of the features that has people worried, as it seems to be something of a game-breaking feature. But it's just another one of those elements that needed to be put in our hands so we could relay this important fact to you: it works. It doesn't imbalance things. It's limited enough that it can't be abused, it only recharges on the easiest difficulty (see boxout for more on that) and you are encouraged to complete in-mission objectives to earn a chunk of it back.

It's also useful in a way that works better for the game than the now-gone maps of previous *Hitman* games did. Before, you had a screen of omnipotence; the ability to see every single person on the level, where they were, where they were looking, whether they were alert or not – and you could use it whenever you wanted for however long you wanted. Instinct is a videogamey superpower, no doubt, allowing you to see the location of enemies and targets through walls, the path they're walking and objects on interest in the area, but it's limited enough that you can't just scam your way through levels with it activated. It's not like detective mode on *Batman: Arkham Asylum*.

And then, of course, there's *Absolution*'s online mode in the form of Contracts. It's not what we expected initially – you do make your own hits for others to play through, but you don't just select from a menu. You have to actually carry out the kill/s as you want others to do it, meaning when you're creating a level to share with the world, you can actually die (or otherwise screw up) in the process. Something to bear in mind. But it works, it suits the game perfectly and we can see a fair bit of traction coming from Contracts mode.

Now we've finally had some quality time with Agent 47, it's safe to say we're pretty pumped for his return. *Hitman: Absolution* – it's a *Hitman* game. Who knew?

**Hitman: Absolution** is being developed by IO Interactive. Check out [www.hitman.com](http://www.hitman.com) for more details.



You've failed at hiding that body, numbskull.



### MATTERS OF DIFFICULTY

Because difficulty matters

**YOU KNOW WHAT'S** refreshing? Seeing a list of five difficulty levels, each with a description of the stipulations that come with choosing a particular hardness. Go with easy on *Absolution* and you get recharging instinct and idiotic enemies. Go for normal and you get things a bit tougher, with no recharge. Take the step up to the harder modes and you lose more and more of the creature comforts – and safety of dumbed down AI – until you hit purist mode. On that, the top difficulty, you don't even get a UI. On-screen prompts? Pah, who needs them. The ultimate test of assassiny skill.



This is how every one of Play's team dinners ends up.

### WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's *Hitman*. It really is.
- We were worried, but we were wrong. It's *Hitman*.
- Did we mention it's *Hitman*? Because it is.
- Oh, it looks quite nice too.

### READ ME

This will be the first *Hitman* game released on PS3, as we missed out on the exceptional *Blood Money* (it did come out on PS2, mind).



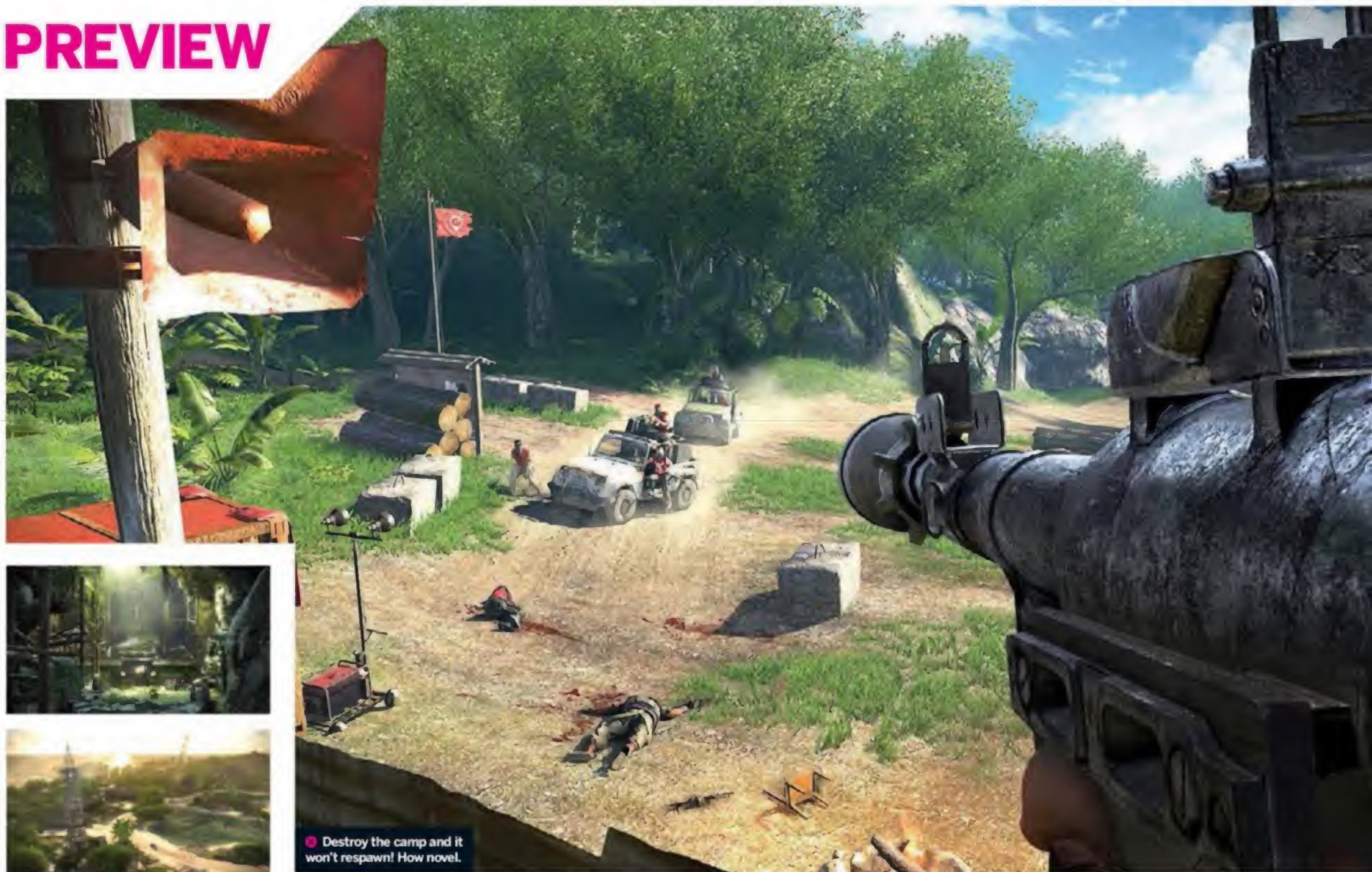


# KILLER REPORT

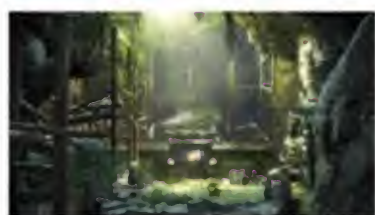




# PREVIEW



✶ Destroy the camp and it won't respawn! How novel.



## STARING INTO THE ABYSS

Dan Hay, producer and Jamie Keen, lead gameplay designer

**Q: Jason Brody's an everyman: how does he cope?**

A: You end up in a situation that when it's working right and you're playing the game as it's intended to be played, with Jason being a fish out of water, he's very much on the defensive, learning to deal with the world.

**Q: So how do we cope as players, if Brody's only just learning himself?**

A: The player goes through that journey at the same time. You learn how [things work as he does.] It progresses hand in glove.

**Q: What about the survivors? How do they react, especially to Brody's killing streak once we inevitably learn the ropes?**

A: You see it in the reaction of Daisy... at one point you go out looking for a knife, and when you find it she tells you that knives don't bring people back. They take them away. You realise in that moment there's been a definite separation between the characters, so for us it's about the game rewarding you for everything that you're doing out in the open world, you're building your tattoo which will invariably help you in the task of getting your friends back, but it doesn't come without the fact that it invariably changes you.



✶ It a Far Cry game on a tropical island, there had to be an homage somewhere.



RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

# Far Cry 3

## Entering Ubisoft's kingdom of madness

PS3

Was it only four years ago? It seems like a much longer time that we were persistently at death's door, fending off malaria in a despot's private safari, dodging respawning checkpoints and hating on Ubisoft for nearly being utterly brilliant, nearly being diabolically awful. *Far Cry 2* was a simultaneously excruciating and liberating shooter that divided opinion. So what, exactly does Ubisoft Montreal intend to do with the sequel? "Remember when you played *Far Cry*, the graphical tour de force? You saw the island and the water and it was like 'Oh my gosh?'" producer Dan Hay told us, "We wanted to get that feeling back. We're borrowing from what *Far Cry 2* did, and we're bringing back fire and outposts and the sense of scale of the open world: it's a child of those two fathers."

Somehow we don't think that *Far Cry 3* is going to be the same as either of its predecessors, or the unlikely offspring of two men. We've seen the videos, we've watched that Scandinavian psycho Vaas spouting philosophical justifications for his flaky state of mind while waving a blade in our faces. What is *Far Cry 3*

really about? "We're making this very human, personal story of Jason and his development, and that's the new thing that's come in with *Far Cry 3*... The first thing we did is try to make [Jason's journey] personal. Each of us has been through that: as simple as walking into a bar, thinking you can handle yourself and getting into a fight, or getting on a plane and going to a place you've never been before, and having every pre-conceived notion proved wrong."

That is a pretty big difference. Jason Brody isn't a manufactured killing machine or a man on the edge with nothing to lose. He's got everything to lose in fact, he's an ordinary guy who's been snatched out of his bubble and for a while, thinks he's going to die at the hands of his pirate captors. We feel Jason's anguish; the average games journalist wouldn't fair much better when faced with their impending death. We're grateful then, that when control over the situation is returned to both of us, killing to avoid being killed is something we're more comfortable with, even if Jason isn't very good at it and he has nowhere near the arsenal that was available to his

former incarnations. "It's important that the player does feel an echo, a familiarity about it," lead gameplay designer Jamie Keen told us, "Hopefully there's something in Jason that they recognise. You're not this supersoldier, you're not saving the universe. That's very important for us. We want it to be that Jason is the person that you wish you were in that situation, that you wouldn't be a gibbering wreck, that you would take control and kind of become the hero."

So while you're getting to grips with the game, the unlikely protagonist you control and the initial relationships you have with the other survivors (who don't turn out to be as fond of killing as Jason), Jason's getting used to his situation. "The interesting thing that happens then is that, say you go off and nail an outpost, perform loads of takedowns, set fire to everything and everything explodes, and you're like 'YES!': you've enjoyed it, and Jason is kind of liking it as well. He's going out, killing people, becoming empowered, and he's thinking that he's good at this stuff."

"And then you run back into your friends, who have had a very different experience, some really

nasty things happening to them, and they're wondering what's happening to you: you've got these tattoos, you're going out and killing people and enjoying it. That discrepancy, where what the player is doing isn't what the character is doing: we try and minimise that."

The Ubisoft influence is evident in map and mission flow: the freedom to explore is yours once you've been let off the leash, in an environment that smacks of *Far Cry 2*, *Assassin's Creed* and also Rockstar's *Red Dead Redemption*. Hunting animals can turn you a profit from the clothes and wallets you can make from their hides. The island's various flora can be combined in an alchemy system to make medicines and poisons, while scaling radio towers and disabling the equipment at the top will allow you to survey the land around it.

What we didn't see were respawning checkpoints. Somehow, Ubisoft has got away with creating an open world shooter without including the most hated feature of *Far Cry 2*. *Far Cry 3*'s ecosystem seems to work well enough without them – at least, for the time we played. And if it can hold that quality through to the end, side-missions, open-world exploration and main story, then untainted brilliance will be within *Far Cry 3*'s grasp.

## WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ It includes one of the most unhinged characters in videogames.
- ❑ The hero isn't a hero, he's just some guy.
- ❑ It's a bit like *Lost*, but with big knives.
- ❑ It's every bit as big and ambitious as its predecessors.

## READ ME

Fancy a little freelance work? Or maybe revenge is payment enough? Wanted missions allow Jason to take back control by hunting and killing pirates in a specific way to complete the terms of a contract.

*Far Cry 3* has an 'Insane edition' that includes a bobble-head Vaas. Developed by Ubisoft Montreal, check it out here, [www.far-cry.ubi.com](http://www.far-cry.ubi.com)



# PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: 15 JANUARY

## DmC

● We still hate Dante's new hair.

### Catching up with Dominic Matthews from Ninja Theory and Alex Jones from Capcom USA on Dante's eye-bleeding reboot

PS3

**Will the Ninja Theory redesign of Dante serve as the official design of Dante in future instalments?**

AJ: In all likelihood, yes, but it's hard to say right now as we're just not thinking of sequels or working on anything else at the moment. Right now, we're completely focused on shipping in January.

**Have you had any feedback from the original *Devil May Cry* team? Are they involved in the project at all?**

AJ: We're working closely with a lot of the creative team from the original games and they're very pleased with how the game has turned out.

**What do you feel it is about Ninja Theory that makes it a good match for *DmC*?**

DM: As a studio, we're massive fans of *DmC*. That's what stood out for Capcom. We've also shown a level of competence with our previous games and proved we're capable of taking something to the next level. We have our own visual style and unique storytelling abilities, but can remain faithful to the source material. Most importantly for fans, *DmC* is a series known for combat and we're able to add to it.

**When the game was first announced, fan feedback was quite negative. Would you say that feedback is more positive now, closer to launch?**

AJ: Any time there's a substantial reboot of an established franchise; hardcore fans will always be the first to resist. We knew we were taking a chance, and it's fair to say we were surprised by some of the feedback. We never wavered, though, and once we got the game into a playable state, and gamers got hands-on, a lot of those fears started to dissipate.

**Are you concerned the gaming industry is following the Hollywood trend of rebooting established licenses because of a fear of releasing new IP? Do you think gaming fans are only going to become more upset?**

AJ: We're already seeing that with *Tomb Raider* as well as *DmC*. You know, many will resist, but as long as a game keeps its identity and retains enough of what is essential, updating

appropriately to appease both sides, there really is nothing to fear.

**You've adopted a more futuristic setting as opposed to the medieval fantasy we've become accustomed to. Why have you designed the game this way?**

DM: While designing, one thing we thought is 'What would Dante's world be like if it were contemporary?' That guided us in the first place. That's why you're seeing the likes of security cameras and droids. We wanted to make something relevant for people to play in the here and now.

**What are the key elements *Devil May Cry* fans should look out for in this reimagining?**

DM: Combat is *DmC*'s finest focus and our system allows people to express themselves in combat. Fans of previous games loved to break down enemies with combos. They'll absolutely be able to do that here. Yes, we wanted to take Dante in a different direction, but our

game is founded on the principles the series is renowned for.

**Were you worried the recently released HD collection would turn people away from the new interpretation of *DmC*?**

AJ: Not at all. The HD collection came out a year after we announced and by that time, there was a slight subsidence in fan anger. The HD collection reminds people of how great the series is and we've been able to build on that. We actually found it complementary. It will whet people's appetite for what's to come.

**Any chance of bringing *DmC* to Vita once the PS3 version is finished?**

AJ: We're not looking at other formats right now. If other hardware or platforms make sense, we will look at those in the future. However, we've nothing to announce just yet.

*DmC* is being developed by Ninja Theory and produced by Capcom. Check it out here: [www.devilmaycry.com](http://www.devilmaycry.com)

### WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Ebony, Ivory & Rebellion. Dante's arsenal has never handled better.
- Big, badass boss battles that will absolutely beat you senseless.

- Trademark humour, multi-dimensional characters and intricate story.
- Limbo City is a very detailed, contemporary world just waiting to be explored.

### READ ME

*DmC* is the fifth game in the *Devil May Cry* series, but it takes place in a parallel universe. This more modern *DmC* will explore Dante's origins in much greater detail.





• This might well be Capcom's most successful Western collaboration.



• Looks like Ninja Theory has tapped into what makes a *Devil May Cry* game essential.



• Giant disembodied heads. It's like *Bayonetta* all over again.



• Enemy designs are certainly in the ballpark of the past four games.



## DMC

Sock it to 'em!

**COMBAT IS MORE** sophisticated than ever in *DmC*. In addition to guns, Dante can morph Rebellion into an axe or a scythe to break through heavily armored foes and add notches to his combo belt. He can also use a grappling hook which both pulls his enemies towards him, and pulls Dante towards his enemies. Bad guys have nowhere left to hide.



# THE NEXT AGE OF FINAL FANTASY



**BETWEEN LIGHTNING RETURNS: FINAL FANTASY XIII AND MMORPG FINAL FANTASY XIV, SQUARE ENIX'S FAMED FRANCHISE REMAINS A POWERFUL FORCE IN ITS GENRE – BUT HAS THE SERIES TICKED OFF ITS FANS A LITTLE TOO MUCH RECENTLY? WE CHAT TO SQUARE ENIX'S NAOKI YOSHIDA ABOUT THE UPCOMING CONSOLE LAUNCH OF ITS MMO AND TAKE A BROADER LOOK AT FINAL FANTASY'S FUTURE...**

**I**t's been a long time since *Final Fantasy* pleased everyone. After the release of *FFXIII* in 2010, doubt started to set in – the linear structure pissed off a lot of long-term fans, who weren't exactly used to being placed on an unending forward path for 20 hours, while its direct follow-up, *Final Fantasy XIII-2*, went so far the other way in creating a non-linear adventure that it didn't satisfy the forum parasites either. When so much of the love for *Final Fantasy* comes from its past achievements, it's a tough conundrum to work out where to go next.

The solution seems to be simple to Square Enix: try both fan service and experimental game design. *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn*, its upcoming MMO relaunch (though since it never launched on PS3 to begin with, it's being treated as an entirely new game), is built with

long-term fans in mind. Meanwhile, the recently announced *Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII* is another step in a different direction for that offshoot, which puts an action-adventure emphasis on the pink-haired warrior's final adventure. It's two ways to solve the same problem – and it might just be the right approach to make *Final Fantasy* relevant again.

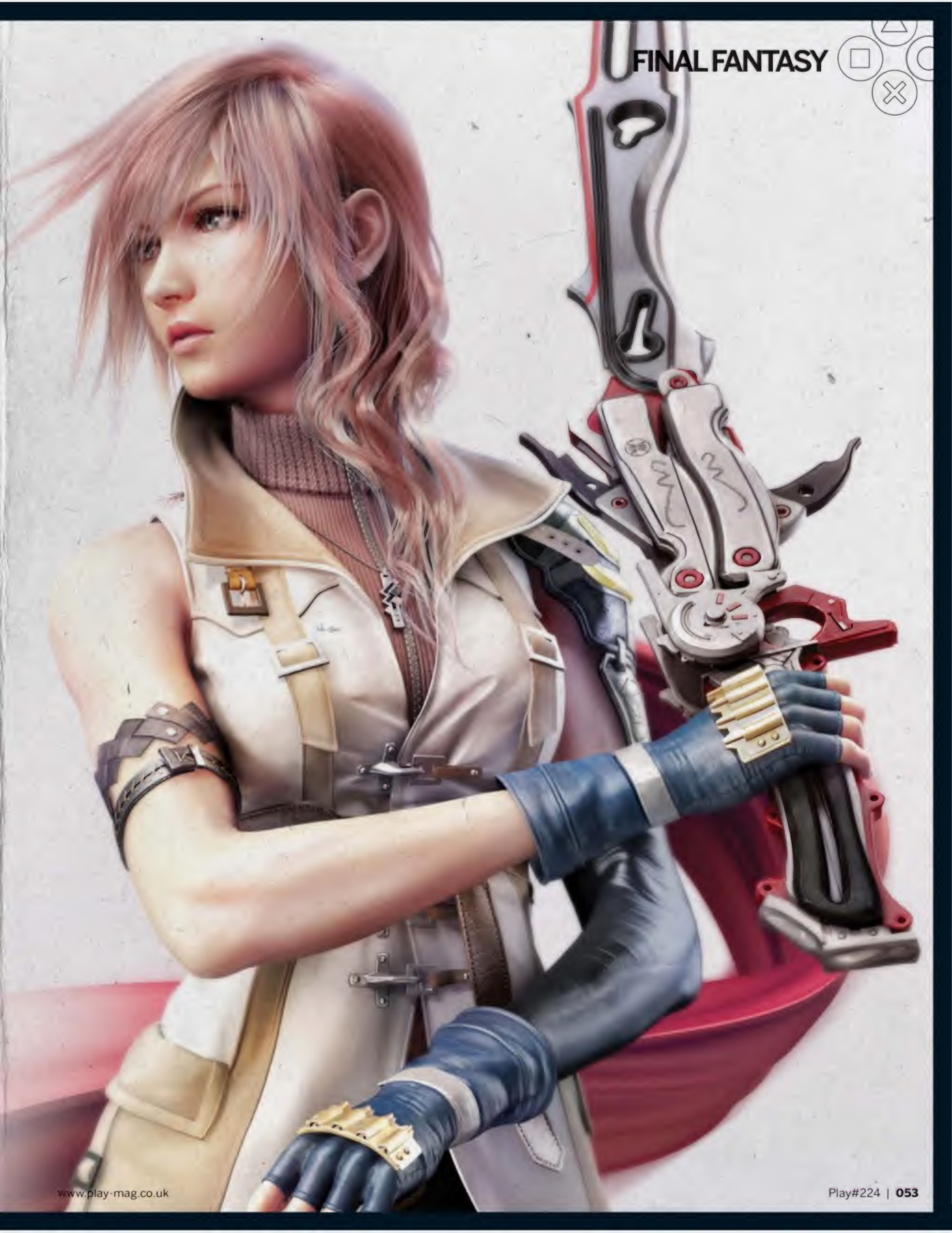
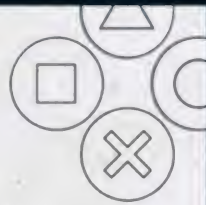
For those who didn't know, *Final Fantasy XIV* faltered on the PC due to a dull overworld, a quest structure that didn't exactly compel players and fundamental flaws in the very basic minute-to-minute gameplay mechanics. Pretty much every outlet cited it as an unfinished mess, and considering the massive investment it takes to bring an MMO to life, Square Enix has taken the retooling of *FFXIV* very seriously.

"Roughly two months after assuming control of the development/operations teams on 10 December

2012, we decided to begin developing *FFXIV: A Realm Reborn*," says Naoki Yoshida, producer and director of the *FFXIV* reboot. "We had finished examining the core game design, client system and server around that time (the primary reason we decided to move onto *ARR*), and after that we started to focus on how *FFXIV: ARR*'s game design should work. It was crucial to ensure every team member was clear about what we should be working towards so that development was heading in the right direction. We created an extensive list and carefully went through every aspect of *FFXIV: ARR*'s design with the team."

If you've never fallen in love with an MMO before, *FFXIV* – like *FFXI* before it – is designed to encourage you to try the genre through the prism of a franchise that you love. "I don't have any major concerns," says Yoshida when we ask if Square Enix see any difficulties in selling the MMORPG to >









The islands of *Lightning Returns* will be beautiful and diverse.

# FINAL FANTASY AGAINST THE FANS

CHARTING THE FAN PERCEPTION OF THE PLAYSTATION-ERA NUMBERED FINAL FANTASY INSTALMENTS...

I LOVE THIS! NOW  
WHERE'S MY  
BUSTER SWORD?

HMM...IT'S  
ALRIGHT, I  
SUPPOSE

GET THAT OUT  
OF MY FACE!  
FAIL! WRONG!

FAN REACTION

## FINAL FANTASY VII

Loved by everyone, this is the *Final Fantasy* that the PlayStation is most associated with, with iconic characters like Cloud, Aerith and Sephiroth becoming JRPG archetypes for many games that followed.

## FINAL FANTASY VIII

For many people, this was the first time they were introduced to *Final Fantasy's* trademark of chucking everything out and starting again. Nevertheless, fans loved this one, as it created similarly compelling characters with a great overworld.

## FINAL FANTASY IX

Ooh, the retro-type one – the entry that was metaphorically lost down the back of the sofa, since it came out just after the PS2 launched. People look back on it positively since it was rather pretty on the aging PSone with its beautiful pre-rendered backgrounds.

## FINAL FANTASY X

Fans loved the way Square reinvented the series for the PlayStation 2, with the first fully 3D world and (gasp!) voice acting, ensuring that *FFX* could live up to its PSone heritage. No wonder it's the first choice for an HD re-release.





“WE HAVE LIMIT BREAK ATTACKS PLANNED FOR THE BATTLE SYSTEM WHICH SHOULD FEEL FAMILIAR AND OUR GOAL IS TO KEEP INTRODUCING EXCITING FEATURES SO THAT FANS OF PREVIOUS GAMES IN THE FINAL FANTASY SERIES SIMPLY WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP SMILING WHEN THEY SEE THE RESULTS”

> unfamiliar console players. “The *Final Fantasy* series has traditionally been a console-based franchise, and another of one of our online games, *Final Fantasy XI* on PS2, has already given us a suitable foundation to implement a user interface suited to consoles in the US and Japan.”

And, to sweeten the deal, they're including elements that are directly lifted from previous games to lure you into it. “We have Limit Break attacks planned for the battle system which should feel familiar and our goal is to keep introducing exciting features so that fans of previous games in the *Final Fantasy* series simply won't be able to stop smiling when they see the results,” Yoshida says.

It's interesting that we've seen two instances in the past few years where Square Enix has directly answered the criticisms of its fans in the actual design of its projects. With *Final Fantasy XIII*, of course, the situation was a lot less dire

– it was still a massive commercial success, meaning that *XIII-2* didn't quite have the same amount of ground to make up. *FFXIV* was clearly riddled with mistakes, and that's why we never saw the PS3 version, even though you may be surprised by how far along in development it was. “I think it was about 70% there,” Yoshida confirms. “However, we decided to discontinue development to avoid reproducing the less favourable aspects of the current version of *FFXIV* in the PS3 release and move ahead with developing *FFXIV: ARR* for PS3 instead. We have also completely done away with the PS3 client we had at the time.”

The PS3 version, then, is totally different, to the point where they actually started from scratch again – though it's hard to get your mind in a place where you consider *FFXIV* to be an all-new title in this series, after it's been talked about for so long, it is still something we've never really seen before. After such a difficult experience with the PC launch, though, don't expect Square Enix to be complacent in thinking this will automatically sell. “No, I don't think it will be any easier than last time,” Yoshida admits. “Since we're talking about an MMORPG, the high performance levels of the underlying system, addition of richer content and speed of updates won't fundamentally change in the PS3 version. In the end, I



think it all comes down to when players can actually experience it themselves, so we will continue devoting our every effort to the game until its release.”

On the single-player side of things, *Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII* goes even deeper into the saga of the most divisive franchise offshoot. Like the evolution between *XIII* and *XIII-2*, which saw much of the overall design revamped by the developers, this too marks a creative sea change. *Lightning* is the focus of this epic, to an extent that is rare for the usually party-oriented series. That's because Square Enix perceives her as a strong character, even going as far as labelling her the face of the company for a while, back when this generation was breaking and *FFXIII* seemed like it was never going to arrive. >

## FINAL FANTASY X-2

Hot pants? Handguns? Massage mini-games? The first proper *FF* sequel had all the hallmarks of novelty nonsense, and as such it feels like a straight-to-DVD follow-up to *FFX* that only cosplayers really remember fondly.

## FINAL FANTASY XIII

Uh-oh. Seems that *Final Fantasy* fans don't like 20 hours of running along a corridor, as the fanbase turned against the long-awaited thirteenth main instalment. Still, that wasn't it for *Lightning* and company...

## FINAL FANTASY XI

*Final Fantasy*'s first MMO never found its way here, since it required the costly PS2 hard-drive. *FFXI* also rubbed some fans up the wrong way, since the game flew in the face of the story-based single-player adventures the series was renowned for.

## FINAL FANTASY XII

The most daring transformation for *Final Fantasy* yet added a few MMO-style ideas to the combat and exploration elements of the series, which most fans liked, despite a few grumbings about the frankly boring story.

## FINAL FANTASY XIII-2

Slightly higher in fans' estimations – or, at least, those that gave the series another chance – the time-skipping, freeform sequel *FFXIII-2*, which prodded a lot of the necessary buttons in getting fans on-side again.





“THERE WILL ALSO BE A NEW FOCUS ON ACTION-BASED GAMEPLAY IN LIGHTNING RETURNS, AS THE QUITE ACCOMPLISHED BATTLE SYSTEM FROM XIII AND XIII-2 IS BEING RETIRED IN FAVOUR OF A DIFFERENT APPROACH”

> *Lightning Returns* marks the heroine's final battle, and puts her in quite extraordinary circumstances – surrounded by a living, breathing world where the NPCs have daily routines, experiencing the last thirteen days of a beautiful locale. 'World-driven' is the term Square Enix is using to describe it. An adventure governed by your surroundings, searching for a profound concept for Lightning to face as the apocalypse nears.

"You are free to ponder the philosophical aspects of life as you

experience the world as our hero," said *FFXIII* project director Motomu Toriyama at the event announcing the game. One focus of *Lightning Returns* will be to explore the character in further depth – Lightning has been popular among fans, and Toriyama sees her as a symbol of courage, but he wants to take that further. With Lightning as the primary protagonist, this will be the most in-depth cross-section of the heroine to date, and the whole story seems to be centred on the player's attachment to the character.



Expect *FFXIV* to have a console-friendly interface.



PS3 owners are certainly ready for another MMORPG.



We're looking forward to battering lots of tiny monsters.

# FINAL FANTASY X

## A FORGOTTEN CLASSIC

FFX is coming out in HD on PS3 and Vita – here's why you need to give it another go

### THE BEST-LOOKING FINAL FANTASY

I Yeah, we said it. Forget technology – *Final Fantasy X* has defied time with the quality and variety of its art, with career-best character designs from Tetsuya Nomura and environments that still leave us breathless today.



### BLITZBALL: THE GREATEST FINAL FANTASY MINI-GAME

II You can keep your Triple Triad from *FFVIII* and your Chocobo Racing from *FFVII*. We're all about Blitzball, quite frankly, a complex underwater football-style RPG where you can recruit NPCs from around the world.



### IT NEVER ENDS

III With a Monster Arena that lets you gather beasts to create ultra-powerful bosses, *Final Fantasy X* is packed with a ridiculous amount of content designed to keep you playing forever. Terrific value, then.



### CONTROLLING SUMMONS

IV You actually get to fight as the summons! You can even teach them new abilities and upgrade their stats to make the best Bahamut possible, before unleashing some rather nasty Overdrive powers on your enemies.



### LEVELLING-UP

V Progression that isn't a chore? Yup. *Final Fantasy X* turned it into a board game with the Sphere Grid, where you move around a giant map hunting for the best stats and abilities. It took the grind out of the JRPG.



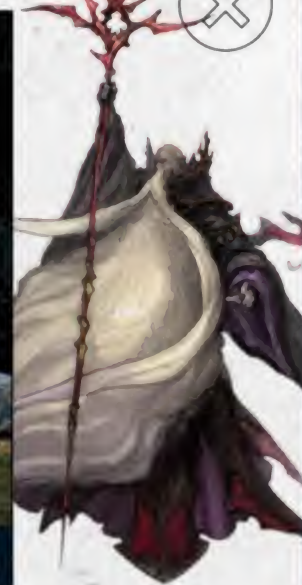
...And one reason you don't

### THE VOICE ACTING

Oh dear god, the laughing scene – HAWHAWHAWHAWHAW! As Yuna later learned when (SPOILER!) her darling beau Tidus departed Spira, laughter is not the cure for all things. Forgive her: she's not a medical doctor.







● Visually, it looks like *FFXIV* takes cues from earlier games.

● Familiar *Final Fantasy* imagery should entice fans.

● Will you and your friends take the plunge on an MMO?

The countdown will alter depending on your actions, and the timeframe will affect what quests and NPCs will be available at certain times. The idea of a clock that ticks down to the end of the world was influenced by real life, drawing on the era of the Cold War, when America and Russia were joshing for the chance to start a nuclear war that would've wiped everyone out for pretty much no reason whatsoever – you've probably noticed it in different forms of popular fiction before. The ticking clock is a powerful image, and Square Enix obviously found something resonant about that scenario, which is why it will hang spectre-like over the RPG experience. We can't fault the idea for originality in terms of videogames, and it should add an ongoing urgency to the narrative.

There will also be a new focus on action-based gameplay in *Lightning Returns*, as the quite accomplished

battle system from *XIII* and *XIII-2* is being retired in favour of a different approach, one that has yet to be revealed. Likewise, with such a specific type of locale, the structure of the game is promised to be open in comparison to the previous two tales in this saga. What's interesting about this collection of ideas is how experimental they are – only Square Enix would try to completely overhaul the type of game it's making for the final instalment in a series. Still, who knows? An action-oriented *Final Fantasy* is an enticing concept, and if *Lightning Returns* is a success, it could filter down to future games in the series. This could represent the evolution that some critics have been asking for.

*Final Fantasy* is still living somewhat in its past – at PAX a couple of months ago, a projector slide from Square Enix called this the 'Modern Age' of the series, post-*FFXIII*, while the

time before that, stretching all the way back to *Final Fantasy VI* on the SNES, was referred to as the 'Golden Age'. Certainly, it's been a transitional period for this JRPG franchise as Square Enix tries to figure out what a contemporary *Final Fantasy* should be, but both of the approaches suggested by *Lightning Returns* and *FFXIV* suggest exciting solutions to the same problem.

Yoshida still believes that *Final Fantasy* can set the standard, and that *A Realm Reborn* has a part to play in it. "Without a doubt, what gamers are anticipating most for the latest entry in the *Final Fantasy* series has to be beautiful graphics," he says. "I don't think other titles can compete when it comes to this level of visual prowess. Another [point of anticipation] would be fans of the series throughout the world being able to come together and enjoy the 'world of *Final Fantasy*' on a global scale." ⓧ



IN A BLIZZARD, NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM

# DEAD SPACE 3

DEAD SPACE 3 HAS CONFOUNDED AS MUCH AS IT HAS IMPRESSED SINCE ITS REVEAL EARLIER THIS YEAR. WITH THIS IN MIND, WE SOUGHT OUT VISCERAL GAMES TO TELL US JUST WHY THE THIRD IN THE SERIES WILL REMAIN THE EXPERIENCE WE KNOW, LOVE AND FEAR

**R**eally though, why the hell does Isaac have fur on his space suit/armour? "We had hundreds of concepts with goggles and ski masks and gloves and big coats and all kinds of things – and one of the things that just really resonated with our team was the look of the fur collar. So the answer is: it just looks cool." John Calhoun, associate producer at Visceral Games, finally put our longstanding question to rest. He also talked in-depth about elements that fans might find more interesting, of course.

Like: what on earth (or Tau Volantis) is going to happen this time around? "Everything is interconnected and one of the cool things about *Dead Space 3* is we're going to really deliver on our promise to answer the questions that have been set up in the previous games," Calhoun explained. "You're going to know what these things are, you're going to learn where the necromorphs come from, why they behave the way they do." It may be bringing in a new face – a 'foil' to Isaac in the shape of John Carver – but this is a story steeped in lore; in history. Another face thrown into co-op isn't about to derail that.

In fact, as Calhoun pointed out, Carver's inclusion works on a deeper level than just randomly throwing in another character: "He's career military but he has a personal vendetta against the necromorphs, whereas Isaac is an engineer and is just trying to forget it all and get away. The way these two characters intersect is really interesting, but also the way they have to rely on each other in co-op is pretty cool." It affects how you play the game, and it affects how scared you are.

"If the game feels like it's too scary for you then you can play it with a friend and maybe alleviate some of

that tension," Calhoun told us. "Of course, if you want that solo experience, it's always there: our single-player campaign has no AI followers so it's that classic *Dead Space* gameplay that you've come to love. But if it's a little too much and you feel like you need to take a break we say 'Don't take a break, just have a friend drop in and join your game.'"

But why, pray tell, would a series we're so used to still be able to scare us? *Dead Space* is home to monster closets, to panic-making ➤



A detailed, high-contrast image of a Necromorph head from the game Dead Space 3. The head is heavily mechanical, with a complex arrangement of blue and orange components, including what looks like a visor and various sensors. It has a menacing, almost skeletal appearance. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a deep-sea or industrial environment.

# DEAD SPACE 3



“ Transmedia lets us tell the story that we want to tell in the right medium. The Dead Space series has this huge story bible – the lore goes back hundreds of years before the events of the original, and our story producer knows what happens hundreds of years beyond the events of Dead Space 3. We kind of view the game as the tip of the spear, but if we have a story to tell we’ll find the right way to tell it ”



## ■ PLAY YOUR WAY

"The weapon system allows you to use all of these different combinations in ways that you see fit. So you can build the ultimate weapon for your playstyle and really get the most out of the game."

## ■ BUILD AND BURN

"As you're going through the game you're going to find weapon parts. Some of these parts might be frames, which are the handles that define whether they're one or two-handed, the actual tools themselves, which define the projectile types – say a plasma tool, or a military tool, a rip core, a telemetry spike. You'll also find adapters, which modify the projectiles of those tools – so an adapter might add spread fire, or compress the effect, or accelerate it, or slow it down."

## ■ GOING UNDERGROUND

"What we're trying to achieve is – rather than depth in any one weapon – breadth across a variety of weapons. So we're hoping that players will swap out weapons as they see the challenges coming up. If they know they're going to go underground and there's a particular enemy that you frequently encounter underground then you might say 'Hey, I'm going to go to the weapon that I previously crafted that was perfect'. We're hoping that's the sort of playstyle that players will adopt."

# GUNS DO KILL PEOPLE (and necromorphs)

Weaponry is a big focus of Dead Space 3, so we had Calhoun take us through some of the finer points

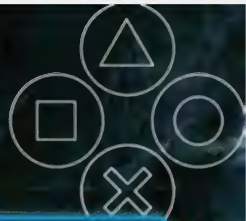
## ■ HOW MANY SHOOTERS?

"I would say the most conservative estimate, not giving any cheat combos, is in the low six-figures."



● Zero-G combat?  
We're okay with that.





## BUFF IS THE STUFF

"We have a whole bunch of attachments – these are the buffs, so you can put like a flame blaze attachment which adds a little bit of flame damage to each of your projectiles, or you can even add support/defensive attachments such as the ability to recharge your partner's stasis in co-op when you recharge yours."

## CIRCUIT TRAINING

"Every frame that you find can have anywhere between two to eight circuit slots, and you can also upgrade the slots to unlock more. What happens is as you're playing the game you'll find a circuit that says 'Hey, this increases the damage of your weapon', or it increases the capacity or the clip size or the rate of fire – things like that. They're very rare, these circuits."

## NO GOING BACK(WARDS)

"The upgrade system in the previous games used an upgrade path that we as the developers pre-determined, so there was really no deviating. Now that we have – basically – user-created weapons we can't create an upgrade tree for every single weapon."

## CHANGES FROM TOP TO BOTTOM

"You can have top and bottom fire, so you can have a ripper/plasma core, or a line gun/grenade launcher."

# THE INDEPENDENT VIEW

Dead Space: the pinnacle of horror gaming? Apparently not

■ *Dead Space* devs have played the scariest game in recent memory, the PC-only *Amnesia: The Dark Descent*. But have the indie devs who made *Amnesia* at Frictional Games played *Dead Space*? Thomas Grip, one of the key members at the studio, explained to us his views on the series and the modern horror genre in general.

"I enjoyed playing both *Dead Space* and *Resident Evil*, but I do not think that they are very good horror games. These games are mostly about shooting stuff and the horror serves more as some thematic backdrop. What annoys me is that all these games revolve around some kind of combat mechanic, be that sneaking, shooting, melee or whatever else. Then the entire game is built around that and what you get is not really a horror experience but a combat experience with a horror element that you are free to ignore. I want my horror games to have the horror at the core."

"Many modern games assume the players are morons, when most people playing games can actually handle a lot more. So they just go for the simplest kind of fun and build the game around that. I

think the problem is also very conservative game design thinking, where everything needs to be some kind of mechanical challenge at the core. This kind of thinking is often counter-productive for horror."

"Modern games have a very hard time to live up to the standards set by older games like *Fatal Frame*, *Silent Hill* and *Siren*. They should have learned from these games and pushed further, but instead they lowered the scare-factor quite a bit."

As for Visceral's take on *Amnesia*? Calhoun was enthusiastic: "We played *Amnesia* and that game is awesome – all of our level designers love it. What we do is we play something like that, or we go out and watch a movie, or we watch *The Walking Dead* on AMC and we're inspired. We don't copy, but we look at something and we say 'What is it that makes that work?' What works [in *Amnesia*] is the audio – you never see your foes, but you hear them. What makes *The Walking Dead* work? It's the human drama amidst this apocalyptic terror that's happening around you. So we try to find what's there and see how we can contextualise it into the *Dead Space* world."

Everything starts from the pool that is the *Dead Space* back story, the lore bible that we have, and it shoots off from there

fulcrum of our story. This story is about survival on the planet of Tau Volantis – the setting is where we're really focusing our horror elements."

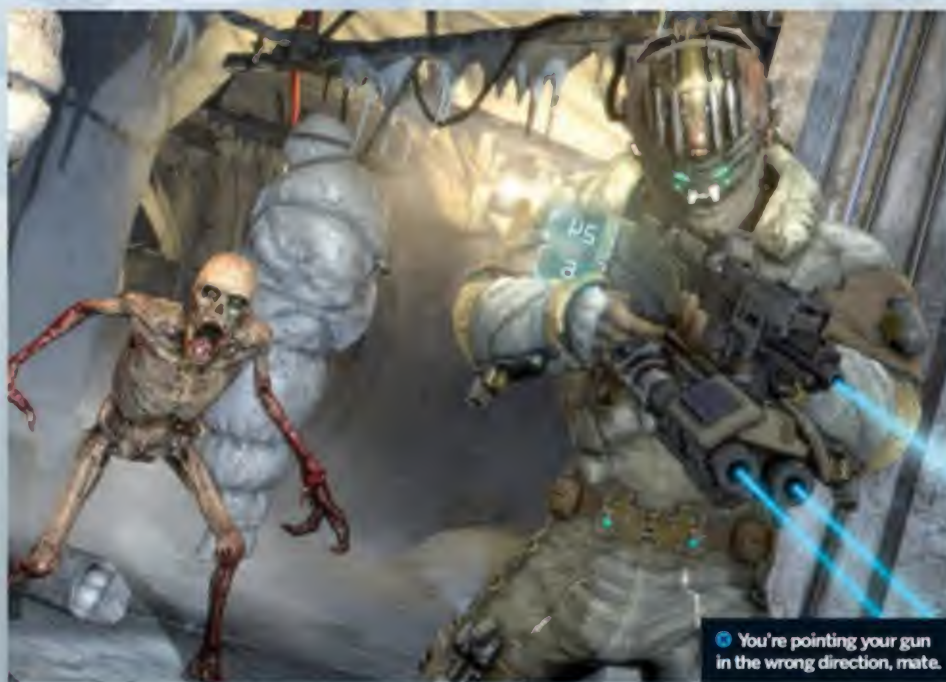
> way for considered, dismembering shooting – surely there isn't much else that can be done to terrify us? Surely we've seen it all before?

Calhoun agreed, and also pointed out why we were being stupid to assume they wouldn't be able to scare us again. "We can't use the same tricks we have in the past. This is why rather than trying to find new spins on old tricks we are actually expanding our world – this is why we have Tau Volantis... If you're out on this open plain and there's literally nothing around you but barren snow, then a blizzard comes through and you can't see two metres in front of you and you hear the necromorphs howling out in the distance – there is no back against the wall. There is no place to hide."

"It's a way to really ratchet up the tension in *Dead Space 3* that we never really had the opportunity to do in previous games." And we're unlikely to see much of a return to the cheap tricks of Isaac seeing a ghost every ten minutes. "Psychological horror was actually a key theme in the story of *Dead Space 2*, but while it's still important to *Dead Space 3*, it's not the

Of course, scaring you is only the half of it – this time around you're going to have far more options when it comes to dealing with the spindly onrush of bastardry that are the necromorphs, and the new human enemies (who, of course, you can still dismember – "We've already checked with the censors and it's okay," according to Calhoun). The weapons bench has been revamped to allow a huge number of different combinations when it comes to the guns that you build yourself. "We're trying to make sure that weapon crafting and using tools strategically against the necromorphs are more on the forefront of players minds," Calhoun said. "What we saw in previous games was people got the plasma cutter, they liked it – they thought it was really cool – and they didn't really play with any of the other weapons."

But with *Dead Space 3*, "you're going to make a huge variety of tools, so you can build your perfect crowd-control weapon, your perfect area of effect weapon, your favourite back against the wall last resort weapon and that's just touching the surface of >

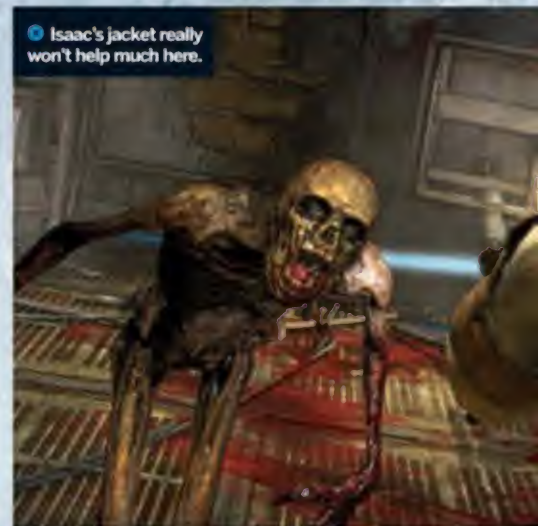


● You're pointing your gun in the wrong direction, mate.





• Tau Volantis has its own brand of necromorphs.



• Isaac's jacket really won't help much here.



> it." It might sound like this method railroads players into a particular style of play – so we asked Calhoun about that. "Yeah, but not into *our* way of playing – we're hoping it's going to be into *their* way of playing." The strategic implications and personalised approach of weaponry – up to the 'low six-figures' when it comes to just how many combos are available – means this should be a far more individual experience for every player. We also wanted to know, though, if it was possible to just make a super-grenade launcher and press the win button to complete the game. Calhoun again assuaged our fears: "One of the things we've been doing since December 2011 is constant tuning – I get asked that question a lot 'Can you build the ultimate game-killer?' and the answer is no, because we've been tuning our weapons for months now."

There's also been tuning to Isaac (and Carver, of course), making him more responsive to control for players – he can duck in and out of cover as well as take evasive manoeuvres (known as 'dodging'). But... well, how to put this nicely... isn't this just Visceral saying 'Sorry, we messed up how the player characters control?' Calhoun calmly explained to us why we were wrong: "No, we didn't mess up the game – we've always made the game that we want." Ah. Sorry. He went on: "[In *Dead Space 2*] we made Isaac run a little bit faster, we made the aiming easier to reflect how we perceived him to be growing [as a character] and we're doing the same in *Dead Space 3*."

"With the addition of human enemies – which I'd like to stress are not the primary opponent, they are just one of a cast of characters – when you're facing and squaring off against a human enemy who is tactical and

can evade and crouch and take cover, if Isaac can't do the same things, he feels sluggish and stupid. We gave Isaac those abilities so he would feel like he's on par or at least capable of surviving against a new foe."

There's been trepidation from fans towards *Dead Space 3* – people are worried it might be moving away from what made the first two games so special. Calhoun wanted to reassure us – to reassure *you* – this isn't the case: "We, as the developers, love *Dead Space* – we're its biggest fans – but we are also its steward: we want to protect it and make sure it's true to its roots. I can promise you – everything that's going into this game is just to make it more *Dead Space*, to make it more awesome than anything that's come in the past... Judge the game for yourself when you have the controller in your hand, because you'll see just how *Dead Space* it still is." ☒





# WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, HOW?

It isn't just the games – it's a universe of content, and as Calhoun pointed out: it's all connected

**FEBRUARY 2013  
DEAD SPACE 3,  
PS3**

Our hopes were confused, but they're high now.

**MARCH 2011  
DEAD SPACE  
(MOBILE), IOS/  
ANDROID**

A graphical tour-de-force for tap-screen devices, and actually pretty good. Set during the events of *Ignition*.

**JANUARY 2011  
DEAD SPACE:  
AFTERMATH,  
MOVIE**

Less fun than the first film, but still decent brain-off (violent) enjoyment. Set between the original game and *Dead Space 2*.

**JANUARY 2011  
DEAD SPACE:  
EXTRACTION, PSN**

A Wii conversion, yes, but a really good game. Rated 88% in *Play* 203. Prequel to the original game, takes place during the events of *Downfall*.

**JANUARY 2011  
DEAD SPACE 2,  
PS3**

The improved sequel, rated 92% in *Play* 201.

**NOVEMBER 2010  
DEAD SPACE:  
SALVAGE, COMIC**

A one-off interquel comic to bridge the gap between the original game and *Aftermath* movie.

**OCTOBER 2010  
DEAD SPACE:  
IGNITION, PSN**

Let's just forget about this one... 47% in *Play* 199. An interquel between the first and second games.

**JULY 2010  
DEAD SPACE:  
MARTYR, NOVEL**

More of that lovely back-story people craved so much, covering the birth of the Church Of Unitology.

**OCTOBER 2008  
DEAD SPACE,  
PS3**

The original, rated 87% in *Play* 172. Picks up where *Downfall* leaves off.

**OCTOBER 2008  
DEAD SPACE:  
DOWNFALL, MOVIE**

Gory, quite silly, but good for fans and entertaining. Prequel to the original game, takes place during the events of *Extraction*.

**MARCH 2008  
DEAD  
SPACE, COMIC**

Prequel to both *Downfall* and *Extraction*, and a nicely-produced series.

Creating weapons should kill many hours.



“ I do think evil exists  
within us as human  
beings and that is a  
very mature subject ”





# TOMB RAIDER

Interview: Brian Horton, art director of Tomb Raider

## CHATTING TO **BRIAN HORTON** FROM **CRYSTAL DYNAMICS** ABOUT LARA'S CONTROVERSIAL NEW DIRECTION

**How do you make good use of seven year old hardware when doing a full reboot? How does it limit you?**

We wrote the tools and rendering engine from the ground up. The foundation of the engine is the same, but it's had a fresh coat of paint. The engine is now fully lit in real-time, making the game much more dynamic. Also, our designers and artists have a lot more control over the gameplay, which makes a gigantic difference in being able to iterate.

The biggest technological challenge came when rendering large, traversable open spaces. We needed to make sure the environment felt huge, but at the same time, had a semblance of fidelity comparable to smaller, claustrophobic spaces. We have very big spaces now, bigger than in any other *Tomb Raider* game, and the team has worked very hard to make that happen.

**Following on from the E3 trailer, are there any other events later in the game you think players will find controversial or upsetting?**

Any time a character grows and develops; a traumatic event is usually the catalyst. Once you see the events

of Crossroads in context, you'll see it has all been done in a believable way.

*Apocalypse Now* is one of our inspirations for the game. A good man is cast into a terrible place, and it corrupts him. Lara has a similar experience but comes out the other end as a heroine. We see a contrast between the evil in humanity and the perseverance of good in humanity. I think it is the powerplay of the two. I don't necessarily think the subject matter is controversial but I do think evil exists within us as human beings and that is a very mature subject.

**With *Assassin's Creed III* also heading into the wild and Connor competing against nature, where will *Tomb Raider* be different?**

We decided early on we were going to make large, traversable spaces and a brand new navigation system. Where we diversify is that jumping in our competitor's games feels very digital. Even though you can move wherever you want, we give you more of an air-steer of control. *Assassin's Creed* does that but it often feels like it's doing it for you. In our game we're giving a lot more choice and I think that's how we stand out from *Assassin's Creed*, for sure.



**With *ACIII*, *Crysis 3*, *The Hunger Games* and even *Hawkeye* in *Avengers Assemble*, do you think there's a bow overkill right now?**

\*Laughs\* We were making the game for three years before the bow craze kicked in. We were on a wave, and this isn't a 'me too' thing. The bow is an important survival tool and makes perfect sense. It is the feature weapon for the game and will play an important role. You're going to see a lot of potential as you're upgrading the bow. It's not only going to help you survive, but also circumvent this world.

**What other kind of environments are we going to see in the game?**

You're going to see dramatically different looking environments. The island is one place, but each area in the island has a different ecosystem. It has its own identity and weather pattern. You're going to see dramatic, high-intense moments and huge exploration spaces. It really is paced in such a way, that once you feel like you've done something, then something else comes your way. I'm really excited to share more, but I think at this stage, you've seen an exciting glimpse as to where we're taking the franchise and I hope people will enjoy it when it releases.

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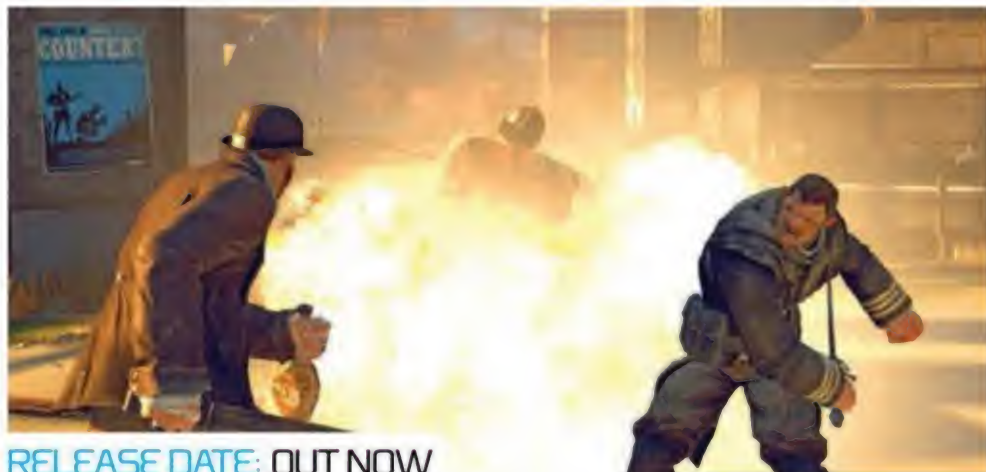
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# REVIEWS

We play games and give them a score



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

## Dishonored

A knife in the dark



### DETAILS

**Publisher**  
Bethesda  
**Developer**  
Arkane Studios  
**Price**  
£49.99  
**Players**  
1  
**Genre**  
Action/Stealth  
**Age Rating**  
18+  
**Website**  
www.dishonored.com  
**Twitter**  
@dishonored  
**Facebook**  
facebook.com/dishonored



Identity – the bane of every assassin. Remain unseen and you're a deadly killer; become too recognisable and you're out of employment, sitting in the job-centre for an everyday 9 to 5 flipping burgers at a fast food stand. For a game that encourages shadow stalking, sticking you behind a badass metal mask at every available opportunity, *Dishonored* has absolutely no problem establishing its own instantly recognisable identity, all whilst retaining a stealthy edge. In a time when fresh IP is a rarity – no, a luxury – *Dishonored* shines.

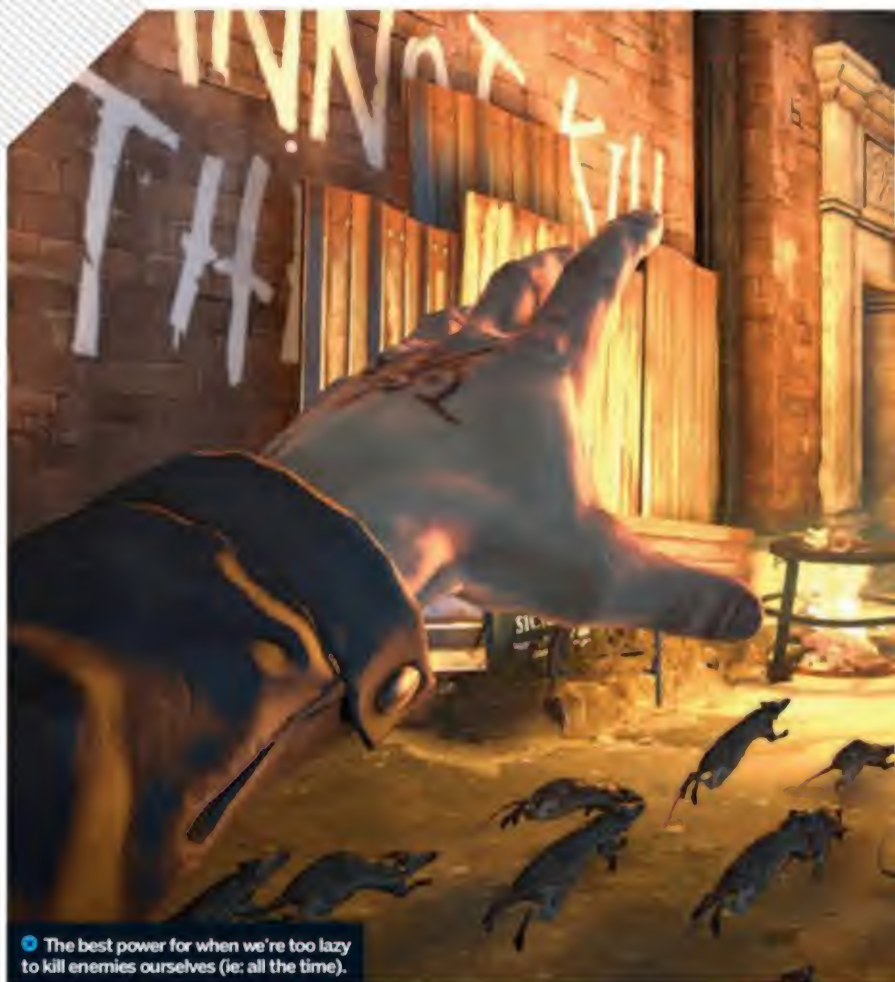
But despite its freshness, comparisons to familiar names are immediate. *Dishonored* plays somewhat like *Mirror's Edge*, with its first person jumping, climbing and bounding across rooftops. There are stealthy splashes of *Thief*, and a sinister atmosphere that's entirely reminiscent of *BioShock*. RPG-style levelling and a concise loot system also enforce stronger visions of Rapture's underwater corridors, but the gameplay execution is so fresh and precise that you never feel you're treading over covered ground.

You are the man behind the mask, Corvo – faithful servant of the city of Dunwall, loyal bodyguard to the Empress and her young daughter, Emily. As Lord Protector, you are the Empress' first line of defence, and you're one of the most deadly men in the entire city.

However, you've just been framed for the Empress's murder, which changes things a little. Disgraced, you're made an enemy of the state by the tyrannous Lord Regent; a radical, wealth-obsessed maniac who's comparable to a propagandist caricature of David Cameron drawn by an impressively artistic Labour MP.

After springing from prison you set up base at the Hounds Pit Pub, joining with a band of Loyalists who are fervently opposed to the Lord Regent's rule. From here you devise plans to slowly bring the world down from around his ears. But the Loyalists aren't your only companions through *Dishonored*'s 15-hour story. You're regularly visited by the Outsider, a supernatural being who gives you magical abilities and an ominous beating heart that you can equip to highlight magical runes, the currency for upgrading your powers, and bone charms, which grant passive abilities.

*Dishonored*'s nine missions are all heavily open-ended, and exploring the city is an unrivalled delight. This heavily corrupt, plague-infested hellhole isn't likely to make the front page of any holiday brochures – it feels like Sin City meets steampunk – but it encompasses an entirely jilted sense of beauty that completely offsets the dark tone flowing through *Dishonored*'s veins. For all



The best power for when we're too lazy to kill enemies ourselves (ie: all the time).

In a time when fresh IP is a rarity – no, a luxury – *Dishonored* shines

the bubonic disease, sunlight bathes the streets and architecture to create a sumptuous and stylised game world that's hard to look away from.

It is as diverse as it is cohesive, too. The wealthy districts and various houses of nobility display a sense of class, decadence and style, with colour becoming more vivid and vibrant. Meanwhile, the flooded financial region and decaying underbelly of sewers portray the city at its utter worst. A brown, putrid green colour palette starts to take over and the claustrophobic atmosphere closes in around your ears. Hulking metal trains drop the dead into quarantine ditches by the dozen, zombie-like plague victims – or Weepers – stumble the streets attacking anyone still alive, and the rats scurry in swarms, violently consuming dead bodies and gnawing at the ankles of the living whilst they still stumble across the cobblestones. In guarded areas, deadly Walls of Light incinerate anyone foolish enough to step into their blinding rays, and mechanical Tall Boys patrol the streets with a watchful eye over their surroundings below. It feels like a city-wide prison, and it's *Dishonored*'s crowning achievement.

Every area you visit is packed full of alternate routes, and the maze-like structure feels so dense that you're always thinking about where to go next and, more importantly, how to get there. While you can just dart from objective to objective, you're continually encouraged to wander off the beaten track, and doing so rewards you with extra gold, hidden trinkets and secondary optional objectives that can completely alter how a mission turns out. Only by going back and repeating missions – which you can do from the main menu – highlights how subtly dynamic *Dishonored* is.

But for all its freedom and supernatural eeriness, *Dishonored*'s plot feels oddly paced, at

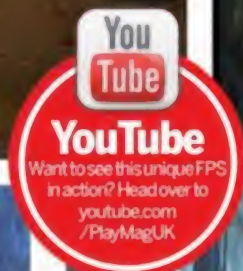


The striking visual design stays consistently impressive until the end.



Ooooooh it's a good game! (Caption by designer Andy.)

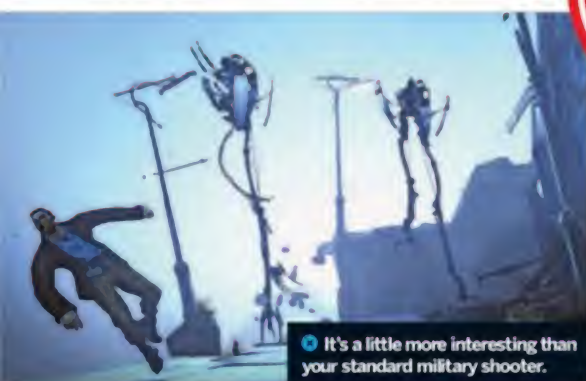




## FAMOUS FACES!

The talent powering the game

**DISHONORED'S GOT HOLLYWOOD** on its side. With Susan Sarandon as the blind hag Granny Rags, Michael Madsen as the head of a cult of assassins, Carrie Fisher as the propagandist speaker, and Brad Pitt as your tech-savvy upgrade provider Piero, you'll hear a handful of recognisable voices as you progress through *Dishonored's* campaign. There's a hint of young talent, too, with teenage star Chloë Grace Moretz voicing young Emily.



It's a little more interesting than your standard military shooter.



Melee combat is one of the few areas where *Dishonored* struggles.

times even one-dimensional – as if you're simply following an assassination bucket list. There are a few twists and turns that attempt to throw you a curveball, but the main "surprises" feel predictable due to the by-the-numbers vibe that still lingers from the first half. Even the presence of the supernatural Outsider doesn't manage to catapult the story into the grand ethereal light it so desperately searches for. By the closing stages, the story has prematurely climaxed, and the Outsider is revealed to be little more than a glorified narrator.

However, as a mute, mostly faceless character, Corvo is an impressively strong lead. He acts as a blank canvas for your decisions to paint colour onto. His interminable silence is your voice; your opportunity to react in a way you deem suitable for the situation.

The characters and environment around you make your actions feel all the more important, but some pale in comparison to the rich game world. Young Emily is the most integral of them all, and she serves as a walking moral compass for you to assess yourself against. Play as a righteous, merciful assassin and she looks up to you, pledging to continue your way of peace when she is finally on the throne. Do bad and she spirals into darkness, like a kid who's listened to too much *My Chemical Romance* and overdosed on *Slender Man* mythology. She'll draw you haunting pictures of her in power, slaughtering innocents, and tell you how she smells the blood on you when you return from a mission. It's menacingly dark, but entirely engrossing to actively shape her persona.

*Dishonored* succeeds in making stealth a fun and viable way to play, even if you're not



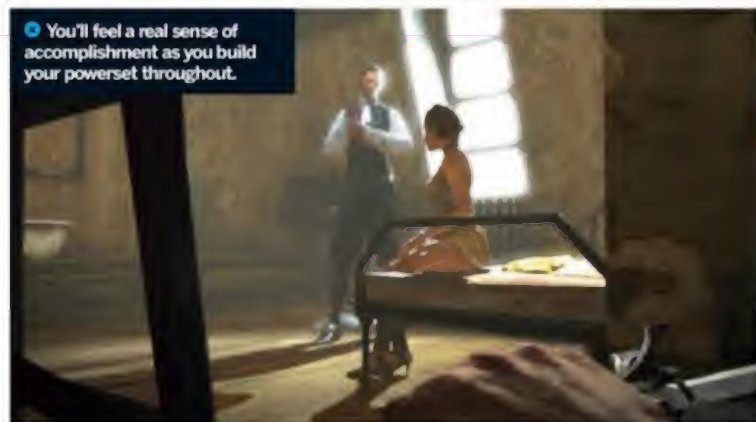




Get in and get out without a trace. Going well so far! Oh, Hang on.



The story tails off towards the end and never quite hits the heights it aims for.



You'll feel a real sense of accomplishment as you build your powerset throughout.



Can you spot any alternative routes here?



Used ranged weapons and you'll avoid this sort of situation. Tactics, right?

> stereotypically good at stealth games. Adaptation in combat is key, and there's a constant toss-up between lethal and non-lethal methods of neutralisation. With a deadly short blade locked to your right hand, your left hand swaps between magical abilities, ranged weapons and grenades. Lethal melee take-downs result in a gory animation that spurts gallons of blood across the walls and floor. Non-lethal takedowns cue a suitably less violent animation, and you just chokehold your enemies until they're snoozing like babies, but your mercifulness is rewarded in the long run.

Out of stealth, if a few guards see you, melee combat is serviceable but considerably less satisfying. Your blows are noticeably less impactful, and lack clunk when you connect with your enemies. You can feasibly just hack away at the right trigger, occasionally blocking against a few swings that come your way, until everyone lies dead in a pool of blood. Whilst this quenches your blood lust, it breaks the illusion of precision that every other aspect of play creates.

Lethal melee take-downs result in a gory animation that spurts gallons of blood across the walls and floor

Your ranged weapons let you rain death on your enemies without being close enough to lick their elbows. The crossbow has multiple types of ammunition; standard bolts for lethal takedowns, sleep darts for non-lethal and incendiary bolts for extra spicy destruction. Standard bolts and sleep darts are silent, providing the perfect way to pick off a couple of enemies before moving into an enclosed space. As for the pistol, think of it as a deafeningly loud last resort that blows away anyone who's unfortunate enough to have it aimed at them. It's not sneaky, is what we're saying here.

Improvements to all of your equipment can be done back at base at the Hounds Pit. Here, tech-proficient Loyalist Piero will upgrade your sword, crossbow and pistol with various add-ons to aid you better in battle. Your ammo and bolt pouches can be expanded to hold more ammunition, and







● Behind-the-scenes look at a successful Play features meeting.



● One of the delights of playing is seeing what artistic flourish will come next.



● Dishonored is one of those rare games that makes stealth fun.

you can buy potions, grenades and other traps providing you have enough gold.

Thanks to the Outsider, you've also got a little something else under your sleeve, which gives you a supernatural edge over your opponents. The go-to power is your ability to Blink, which teleports you onto any surface or ledge in an instant. It's perfect when traversing high-up areas, jumping between buildings, or when you need to escape a particularly tricky situation.

Other powers include the ability to see through walls handy for exploring interiors; the ability to unleash a swarm of rats for brutally gory rodent murder; and the power to slow, and eventually completely freeze, time – our personal favourite. You can also possess rats and fish, using their tiny disease-ridden little bodies to infiltrate vents and underwater passages that your human body could never hope to fit through. All Corvo's personal abilities can be put to use in a multitude of different ways, and it's extremely satisfying to experiment with your powers until you really get to grips with using them in an expert way. Corvo's personal abilities

are upgradeable at any time, but you need a certain amount of runes to afford the level up. Investing in each power is a real commitment, and you'll feel incredibly adept with your personal skill set by the end of the game.

*Dishonored* doesn't perfect everything, but it provides enough fresh ideas that you'll overlook a few missteps entirely. *Dunwall* is a fabulous artistic achievement, and the characters that inhabit its stinking streets react to you so naturally that you feel directly involved in their lives. This is the kind of game that anyone with a passing interest in visual storytelling just has to get involved with.

**Sam White**

## VERDICT

***Dishonored* basks in artistic brilliance. *Dunwall* unravels at your feet, reacting organically to your in-game actions in a way that you feel rooted in its rich lore. Stealth has never been so satisfying as it is in *Dishonored*. One of 2012's finest.**

**92%**

## MANO A MANO

How to handle yourself in combat

**ALTHOUGH YOUR MORE** cost-heavy supernatural powers – possession, slow time etc – drain mana power permanently, low cost powers like Blink and X-ray vision both encourage patience by refilling your bar with some mana over time. As long as you don't cast spells in quick succession, you're able to efficiently manage your own magical fuel, which is extremely handy when you're out in the field with no tonics to sip on. You just need to keep an eye on the bar and not spend the entire time flipping around doing nonsense, so that when you need it, it's there for you.





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

# XCOM: Enemy Unknown

Thinking has never been this much fun



## DETAILS

**Publisher**  
2K Games  
**Developer**  
Firaxis Games  
**Price**  
£49.99  
**Players**  
1-2  
**Genre**  
Turn-based strategy  
**Age Rating**  
18+  
**Website**  
www.xcom.com/  
enemyunknown  
**Twitter**  
@2KGames  
**Facebook**  
facebook.com/xcom



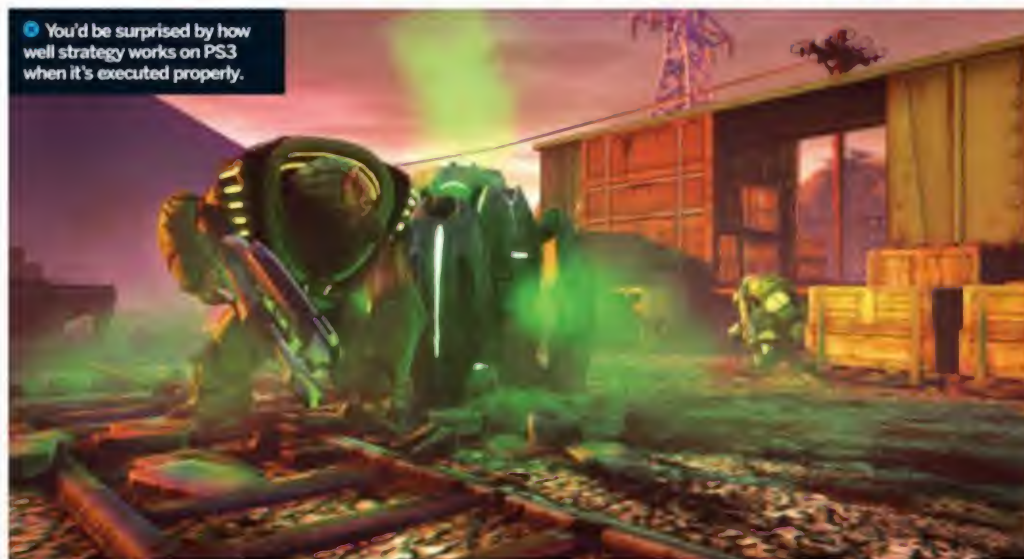
Raise a glass for Jeff 'Mack' Po: left to slowly bleed to death in the corner of an unfamiliar corner of the world, his teammates within whispering distance but utterly unable to stop his inevitable demise. Bow your heads in remembrance for Gary 'Smokes' Busey, whose shuffle from this mortal coil was expedited somewhat by the injection of a vast amount of chryssalid poison straight into his chest cavity. And lest we forget Monumentous 'Plinthy' Thuggery – she didn't

*XCOM hates you. XCOM wants you dead. And XCOM will see you dead, over and over again*

even know her teammate's mind had been taken over by a sectoid commander until he unloaded half of his heavy laser clip into her from close range.

XCOM hates you. XCOM wants you dead. And XCOM will see you dead, over and over again. XCOM relies so much on the mortality of your team – the fragility of humans – that it

You'd be surprised by how well strategy works on PS3 when it's executed properly.



provides players the chance to view a memorial to all the troops lost in defence of the world. And unless you're superhuman, playing it on easy or cheating, it will be quite a list. And you will remember your best troops with a heavy heart. It's still so bizarre that a turn-based strategy game can evoke such a reaction from us, but XCOM does just that.

In the era of ultra-budget mega-blast 9000 ManShooters, you would be forgiven for simply expecting a game like this to simply not exist – or at least never make its way beyond the boundaries of PC gaming. But here we are with a strategy game that really lives up to the genre title, a full release not relegated to PSN-level obscurity, something not hastily crammed onto the console but made with all the format's positives and negatives in mind.

But the best part of it all is simply this: XCOM: Enemy Unknown is one of the best games on PS3. It's so lovingly crafted, so incredibly deep, so absolutely involving that even when your team of veterans – majors, lieutenants,

## PLAYING WORLDWIDE

This time not using the Geoscape

**MULTIPLAYER WAS ADDED** to XCOM as an additional aspect of the game, rather than a part of the core experience. What it means is you're left with a mode that, while a lot of fun, doesn't feel like it totally belongs in the game. That's not to say we're unhappy it's included, of course. The basic premise is two players pick a team of units each, using a pool of points with which to purchase their team – both alien and human – before throwing them into an arena in which to fight each other. Simple, straightforward, complementary to the main experience but overall a bit superfluous.



You don't need multiplayer, then, but it's a fine extra for those taken with such things.



Reverse engineering alien technology is the only way you'll win this war. And get bigger guns.



captains and all – are being minced up by the far superior technology of the unrelenting alien threat, it doesn't damage the experience. It lifts it. You live, you learn – you die, you learn more.

But it all could have fallen so quickly – a genre not totally suited to pad control, thrown at a console and expected to stick, means instant put-off for all but the most committed. This isn't the case, with a slick interface easy to navigate and making it so any mistakes you make are *mistakes you make*. With regards to how that works out in the game, it's pretty straightforward: you have two action points per soldier, per turn. The first can be used to move anywhere within a blue region, then the second follow-up turn can be used to shoot, to use an item, to use a special power, to set yourself into overwatch or to move again a bit further.

Then, of course, you can run beyond the initial blue area, allowing you to travel further





You'll notice the visual style walks a fine line between cartoony and realistic.



Will screenshots like this sell the game to people who only like to sit in cover, shooting things? Maybe.



The grappling hook ability is very useful for your snipers, allowing them to reach higher ground easily.



Do not underestimate the importance of having many satellites.



but not allowing an action at the end of it. Sprint too far and forget about cover and, well, you're lucky if you haven't got another name to add to the wall of remembrance. Or you can shoot/use an item and so on in your first go, but that takes up your whole turn. We said straightforward; we seem to have gone deeper than we expected – but trust us, it makes sense in the game.

What this system leads to is a fine balancing act of strategy and movement: overlapping units to cover one another, the mad dash to rescue a civilian in peril, the hunkering down of the sniper because he can hit anything your team can see so that guy can afford to be lazy. Two simple points of action leads to dozens, hundreds of outcomes. And it's a flexible enough system that you can play to your own style, fielding a team of heavies to eliminate the opposition with weaponry that weighs more

than a small family car, throwing a bunch of nimble, grappling hook-sporting assault class troops in there or, like we do, actually going for a spread of classes and abilities. Because, you know, the latter option actually makes sense.

Thinking doesn't start and end with the battlefield though – you're always having to plan, manage and strategise, and it's always up to you how you go about it. Base management is a case of building new facilities (more research space, for example, or maybe another satellite array), studying new tech or alien corpses (do you want to learn how to build your own plasma rifles, or chop open a floater?) and a number of other elements to keep you on your toes. All funding for the XCOM project comes through the world's governments, and if you piss off an individual nation enough they will leave, cease funding and never return. If you are bad at the game, in other words, you







> will lose. That's something that shouldn't be a surprise, but we can't think of many games this generation – or even last – that totally embraced the notion of abject failure. And believe us, we know about such monumental breakdowns. Stupid Yanks, pulling their funding just because the poxy panic level got too high... Just save often, is our advice.

Because if you don't adopt saving as a part of your strategy, you will lose your best troops. You will end up underfunded and underequipped, staffed by rookie youngsters who can barely shoot straight, with no ability to intercept invading UFOs and, well, with what can only be referred to as 'an absolutely bollocksed planet earth'. Difficulty is one thing we adore – the chance to cock up so much we can totally *fail*? It's the most powerful incentive there is.

This is, of course, an update/reimagining/remake of the original *X-Com: Enemy Unknown*,



Enemy Unknown is the answer to those people who moaned about the FPS XCOM.

released way back in 1995 on PSone. While other games have appeared (on PC, natch) that have tried to carry on the legacy of what is often cited as one of the best games ever made, none have succeeded. It seems all it took to

*XCOM is a fantastic, deep game of strategy and a very sympathetic update to the original*

carry the baton on – to take it to greater heights still – was to throw the licence to one of the best strategy game developers in the world and have the team headed by a man both obsessed with the original game and taught by one Sid Meier (if you're not aware: that man knows his strategy games). Simple, really.

Alright, so it's not simple. But this combination of factors – skill, knowledge, fandom, budget – means we're left with

not only a fantastic, deep game of strategy but a very sympathetic update to the core tenets of the original. The features that made the first game so brilliant to play – the Geoscape, research, base-building, combat,

fear, permadeath – all return, albeit in modified form. Though if they presented us with 1995 all over again there would be questions. And any updates and new features, such as the satellite

system, fit the setting and actually add (even more) layers of thought to the game.

So it's brilliant, yeah? Perfect, right? No, of course not. The biggest point has to be that, despite its quality, it won't appeal to everyone. That's not a statement meant to patronise, but there will be people out there who simply cannot get on board with the central principles of taking your time, planning, thinking and coming up with a reaction on the fly as you get rushed by a muton berserker and a cyberdisc suddenly appears in a flanking position.

But nothing appeals to everyone. Maybe we're starved for this particular genre, which is making us love it more than we otherwise would, but there hasn't been something this special in the genre since... well, since the original. Or maybe *Valkyria Chronicles* – from which *XCOM* takes some cues – at a push.

From a more superficial perspective, it's fair to point out that the game can look a bit off at times. It's very much an Unreal Engine title and it shows – big, chunky soldiers (made to look like action figures, of course) and textures that decide to load in a few seconds after the level has actually loaded might be cause for some to criticise. It's fair – they're imperfections. Sometimes your soldier will shoot in entirely the wrong direction but still score a hit. If your troop can see an enemy and hit them then you can shoot at them, regardless of the obstacles in your way – things like that pop up and can knock you out of the experience somewhat.







## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

We'd say 'know your enemy', but you don't. So know your troops instead



### HEAVY

**WHAT THEY DO:** Masters of destruction, wielding heavy weapons and rocket launchers

**WHY YOU SHOULD LOVE THEM:** See that wall? They can make it go away.

**WHAT TO SAY WHEN THEY DIE:** "He hit hard. They hit harder."



### SNIPER

**WHAT THEY DO:** Hide on rooftops. Pick off the enemy like cowards.

**WHY YOU SHOULD LOVE THEM:** With the right perk, they can see (and shoot at) any enemy sighted by anyone in your squad.

**WHAT TO SAY WHEN THEY DIE:** "Alas, we liked him a bit more than snipers on *Battlefield 3*."



### ASSAULT

**WHAT THEY DO:** Man the frontlines, blazing all of the guns.

**WHY YOU SHOULD LOVE THEM:** They absorb a lot of punishment – they dish even more out.

**WHAT TO SAY WHEN THEY DIE:** "He was built like a tank. A faulty, rubbish tank."

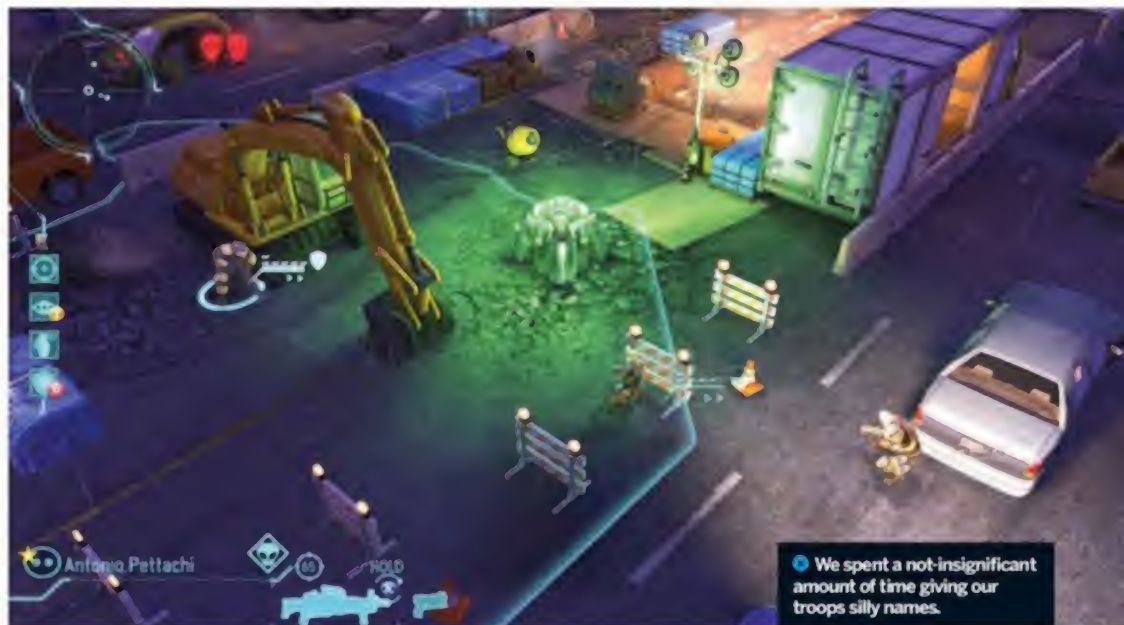


### SUPPORT

**WHAT THEY DO:** Heal the team, throw smoke grenades, make chamomile tea to calm their nerves.

**WHY YOU SHOULD LOVE THEM:** Without multi-healing capabilities of support class, you will die. Even more than usual.

**WHAT TO SAY WHEN THEY DIE:** "Oh. Bugger."



But really, that's all we can think of. Some superficial whining and the traditional, obvious claim that you might not like it, especially if you hate both thinking and losing. They're not problems. They're straws to be grasped at. They're balance in a critique that we're trying to achieve – they're all we can do to hold back the torrent of sheer, unfettered praise-soaked joy that wants to spring forth from our happy glands.

Because *XCOM: Enemy Unknown* is special. It's a labour of love that has paid off massively. Every element comes together, every angle is covered, every little control quirk that could have existed has been ironed out. A few hours in you'll be making progress, a few dozen hours later you'll barely have

scratched the surface. You're not just playing: you're planning. You're using strategy. You're not being patronised. You're being treated like an adult.

But the best part? The best part is that *XCOM* hates you.

Ian Dransfield

## VERDICT

Thinking, planning, failing and dying is back in fashion: *XCOM* is a phenomenal reimagining of a classic title and an instant classic in its own right. The love poured into it and the sheer depth of the experience has created something truly special.

94%







RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

# Worms Collection

Doesn't come in a can, sadly

**PS3** Wow, there are sure a lot of *Worms* games. 17 years after its debut, we've lost count of how many there've been. But you don't really need to play them all. Most are iterations on each other. And, thankfully, three of the best and more distinct are right here in this collection.

*Worms*, released on PSN in 2009, and its 2010 sequel *Worms 2: Armageddon*, may look like exactly the same game. They're both 2D, turn-based strategies about warring worms after all. But they're actually different in some key ways. Think of the first game as the e-sports version of *Worms* and its sequel as the easy-going party game equivalent. The first harkens back to the very first edition of *Worms*, you may remember on PSone, in 1995, and is an unusually restrained interpretation of the game, putting the emphasis on strategy, cunning and resourcefulness. It's the choice of purists, who'd rather maximize a shotgun for two clever kills per turn than drop a concrete donkey on an entire team at once. Those players would be better off with *Worms 2: Armageddon*, a

throwback to 1999's *Worms Armageddon*, which sets the silliness factor at ten and is all about its wide selection of daft weapons like the petrol bomb, the Super Sheep and, er, the Buffalo Of Lies. Most act erratically and cause untold amounts of damage, so battles tend to be more chaotic and unpredictable. Tactical thinkers will still win out eventually, but they'll find it easier to get friends to join in.

The third and final game in the collection is *Worms: Ultimate Mayhem*, a remake of 2005's *Worms 4: Mayhem*, which also throws in redone levels from 2003's *Worms 3D*. The 3D versions of *Worms* got an unfair kicking from kneejerk reactionaries the first time around, but *Mayhem*, especially, was a decent game that put an entirely new spin on an old favourite: its 3D gameplay introducing all-new levels of strategy to the gameplay. *Ultimate Mayhem* is the finest version of that game, boasting a number of improvements, prettier visuals, and a much better camera system, including a picture-in-picture kill-cam, full voice acting in cut-scenes, and smarter enemy AI.



## DETAILS

**Publisher**  
Mastertronic  
**Developer**  
Team17  
**Price**  
£24.99  
**Players**  
1-4  
**Genre**  
Strategy  
**Age Rating**  
12  
**Website**  
mastertronic.com  
**Twitter**  
@Team17Ltd  
**Facebook**  
facebook.com/Team17

So is there anything that's not to like about *Worms Collection*? Well, if you don't like *Worms* then it's a bit dull. But other than that – and if you don't like *Worms*, why would you buy this? – it's pretty cool. All three games offer such significantly different interpretations that it's hard to imagine needing another. Which doesn't bode well for this year's *Worms Revolution*.

Ashley Day

## VERDICT

So if you've ever played *Worms* at any point in your life, then you need to get *Worms Collection*. Well, if you enjoyed *Worms* when you played it, obviously. Otherwise it's a little bit pointless. It's not like it has a FPS hidden in here somewhere.

85%

In this series



**Worms: Forts Under Siege** Issue 122  
A disappointing spin-off that removed much of the strategy and, criminally, the fun. 60%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

# Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz

Finally. Sega's simian series doesn't drop the ball



The *Super Monkey Ball* franchise has had one of the worst falls from grace in recent videogame history. Indeed, the recent 3DS effort was so bad; we were getting ready to tear our eyes out in case this new PS Vita version inflicted similar atrocities on us.

Lucky for our sensitive eyes then that Sega has finally realised that there's more to the *Super Monkey Ball* franchise than naff level design, annoying switches, iffy controls and dull story modes. Granted it's taken Sega 11 long years to realise this, but at least it's a start.

The annoying safety rails found on the tracks of recent games are nowhere to be seen, meaning *Super Monkey Ball* has once again become a game of skill, particularly on the advanced levels. Tight, treacherous corners, devious ramps and other cleverly designed barriers will soon make you work for

your bananas – which continue to grant you precious lives – and manage to (nearly) erase all memory of past low points in the series.

Each of *Banana Splitz*'s levels are cutely themed, while the sheer amount of additional content Sega has included is genuinely staggering. Levels can be created using the Vita's camera to photograph everyday objects. Some admittedly work better than others, but it works more often than not, and it's possible to upload and share levels. At this moment in time you can only download and share creations with friends, but it's still a neat touch, while the online leaderboards offer plenty of additional longevity to the game.

The multiplayer mode (always a high point of the series) has also been tweaked and re-designed to make use of the Vita's in-built abilities, so you now hold the Vita vertically to change direction. Favourites like Monkey Target also make a welcome return, while new offerings like Monkey Rodeo and the AR-based Pixie Hunt add to the fun.

It's a pity then that numerous niggles, particularly on the presentation side, let *Banana Splitz* down a little. Menus are cumbersome and messy to navigate, lengthy loads punctuate the action; while the available motion controls



Collect 30 bananas and you'll earn an extra life. Handy, because *Banana Splitz* gets really tough.



## DETAILS

Publisher  
Sega  
Developer  
In-house  
Price  
£34.99  
Players  
1-4  
Genre  
Puzzle  
Age Rating  
3+

Website  
[www.sega.co.uk/supermonkeyball](http://www.sega.co.uk/supermonkeyball)  
Twitter  
@Sega  
Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/#!/SuperMonkeyBall.BananaSplitz](https://www.facebook.com/#!/SuperMonkeyBall.BananaSplitz)



Monkey Rodeo shows that Sega still knows that fun is an important ingredient in the *Monkey Ball* franchise.



are rather weak. Frustrating difficulty spikes also occasionally halt progress.

Despite these little annoyances, the slick level design, plenty of fun mini-games and a genuine sense of fun will keep you playing and have us genuinely looking forward to a sequel. Now there's something we thought we'd never say about Sega's simian franchise.

Darran Jones

## VERDICT

While it doesn't quite recapture the glory days of old, this is a surprising turn for the *Super Monkey Ball* franchise. Here's hoping Sega continues to tweak the franchise so it can be something to be proud of again.

78%



It looks easy here, but this level is exceptionally brutal. Prepare to lose many continues.





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

# One Piece: Pirate Warriors

## Dynasty Warriors but fun



Publisher Namco Bandai Developer Tecmo Koei  
Price £37.99 Players 1 Genre Action Age Rating 12  
Website [www.onepiece.com](http://www.onepiece.com) Twitter @OnePiece  
Facebook [facebook.com/onepiece](http://facebook.com/onepiece)

Well, isn't this a pleasant surprise? Our cold hearts

have long frozen over with cynicism, only occasionally thawing for cosplay, Katamari and sausage rolls. And yet *One Piece: Pirate Warriors* is so joyful and fun, even our miserable mouths cracked inadvertent smiles.

This isn't to say it's brilliant, because it's not. *One Piece* is a *Dynasty Warriors* clone underneath its anime clothing. It has the same strangely hypnotic gameplay that's perfect for a hangover due to the lack of thought required, as you hurtle through linear corridors mashing square. But then it has the same problem of quickly becoming repetitive, as you hurtle through linear corridors mashing square. That will forever be the strength and weakness of this type of game, sadly.

What saves *One Piece* is that it's crammed with personality. Every inch is bursting with life. Even if you

don't know what the anime is, it's enthusiastic without being annoying, colourful without being garish and has a fun feel of an adventure to it. It also has gorgeous animation that is far, far better than we've ever seen in a *Dynasty Warriors* clone before.

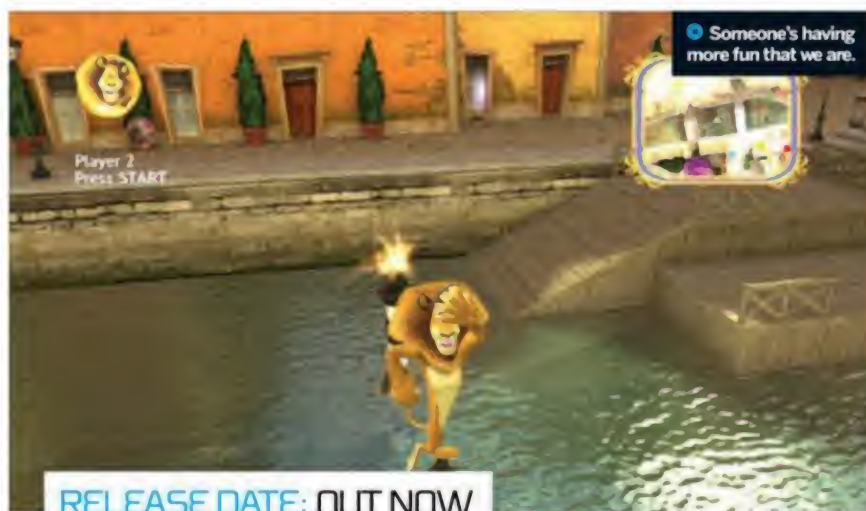
You unlock extra moves and level up but when repetition sinks its teeth into *One Piece: Pirate Warriors*, it never quite recovers. But even so, those who are fans of the anime will love the treatment it's given here while those after something different that perks you up will be just as surprised with this as we were.

Ryan King

## VERDICT

Whether it's the source material or Tecmo Koei's efforts, there's something strangely uplifting here, even if it is a *Dynasty Warriors* game with fewer characters.

69%



# Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted

Where are all the Trophies?



Publisher D3Publisher Developer In-house  
Price £39.99 Players 1-2 Genre Platformer Age Rating 3  
Website [www.madagascar3.co.uk](http://www.madagascar3.co.uk) Twitter @DWAnimation  
Facebook [facebook.com/MadagascarMovie](http://facebook.com/MadagascarMovie)

No-one is fooled by kids movie tie-ins anymore. Not us. Not kids. Maybe parents but hey! They mean well. They're often made on shoe-string budgets (the movie tie-in, not parents) and rushed to meet the cinema release. We only ask that they provide some vague whiff of fun and that they vomit trophies all over us.

*Madagascar 3* fails on both counts. It's far too simple to be fun. You play as the four characters from the movie and switch between them, using their unique abilities to solve the platforming puzzles. Gloria can smash crates, Alex can double-jump and so on. That's right, smashing crates and double-jumping! In 2012! What a lark. Those cliches almost died out with the PSone era yet somehow they have lived through to now, and they're every bit as coma-inducing today as they were back then. *Madagascar 3* isn't

particularly offensive and doesn't get anything wrong per se but it tries so little, there's no way it can screw it up.

If you were thinking of doing a quick smash and grab for Trophies, forget it. *Madagascar 3* demands you collect every hidden item before handing over the goods and while they're not hard to find, it makes a bland game even more dull. Given the lack of engaging gameplay, that was *Madagascar's* one shot at redemption. It failed.

Ryan King

## VERDICT

Bland, boring and all too brief, *Madagascar 3* is an ancient platforming relic dragged into the modern day without any updates or makeovers. Mildly entertaining for two kids but then so is *LittleBigPlanet* and that's a hell of a lot better.

39%





# XBOX 360

## THE UK'S GREATEST INDEPENDENT XBOX 360 MAGAZINE

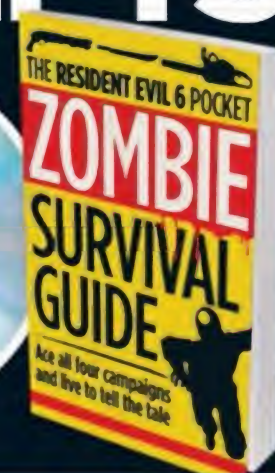
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● Boss battles can get a bit hairy, but at least the villagers throw you a party afterwards.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

# New Little King's Story

A fairytale story with a dark secret



## DETAILS

**Publisher**  
Konami  
**Developer**  
In-house  
**Price**  
£28  
**Players**  
1  
**Genre**  
RPG  
**Age Rating**  
12+  
**Website**  
[www.konami.com/games/newlittlekingsstory](http://www.konami.com/games/newlittlekingsstory)  
**Twitter**  
@Konami  
**Facebook**  
[www.facebook.com/konami](http://www.facebook.com/konami)



Pixar, Spielberg and Disney attempt to tackle the awkward topic of imperialism in this *Zelda/Sim City* like adventure game. Well, that's not true, Pixar, Spielberg and Disney have nothing to do with this game, it just looks like they do – at first, anyway.

*New Little King's Story* is a coming of age tale about young heroic King Corobo who's still learning some of life's most important lessons. His kingdom has been decimated by a collective of monsters hell bent on world domination and it's the King's job to stop them and restore his once prosperous Kingdom. That's the PG description, here's a more accurate description: King [YOUR NAME] is a lad. He's not too concerned with running an empire, that's what he's got a team of know-it-alls for. Is he concerned

It looks like a cutesy, harmless children's adventure game but in reality it's a game about light drug references, sexual undertones and brutal imperialism

with kicking ass, annexing land and giving former strippers jobs? Yes, yes he is.

This game is an over-bearing parent's worst nightmare. It looks like a cutesy, harmless children's adventure game but in reality it's a game about light drug references, sexual



● The cutesy-pie elements mask a rather naughty sense of humour.

undertones and brutal imperialism – in bright colours. Maybe that's a little sensationalist. But the references, although subtle, do exist. And once you notice the first one, the rest are about as understated as a diamond-studded sceptre up your arse.

It's so deceptively post-watershed that we wanted to say to onlookers on the Tube "It's okay, I've just unlocked the 'Half-Baked King' trophy and I've given a former alchemist, turned 'dancer' (stripper) a shop so that she can be an alchemist again", but that sentence is not the sentence of a sane person. It's not just for kids, is the point we're trying to make here.

Throughout the game you'll be tasked with recovering land while rebuilding your kingdom – these two tasks are not mutually exclusive. To reclaim land you'll need certain tools and trades, to acquire these you'll need to build the relevant training academies, whether

it's a barracks for your soldiers, a farmyard for your farmers or a carpenters for your carpentry. All of these trades are needed to progress, for example you'll need a carpenter to rebuild a bridge to get across some water or a farmer to dig up gold. The level of detail and intricacy is really impressive and outside of the conquering missions, you will find yourself tinkering with your village in an attempt to keep your subjects happy.

In reality, *New Little King's Story* is fun. It looks visually impressive with deep powerful colours and the animations are smooth and engrossing. The adult references (such as a subject named 'UB aged 40') are a refreshing nod to older players. However, it does lack a decent multiplayer option, which is wasteful given that this is a game about conquering rival kingdoms. If you're looking to get lost in a classic single-player adventure story and you don't mind looking like a big kid, pick this up.

Jay McGregor

## VERDICT

This is a deceptively adult adventure game that will appeal to a number of age groups with its impressive graphics and an entertaining storyline. However, the lack of a multiplayer feels like *New Little King's Story* didn't quite reach its potential.

70%







RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

# The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes

Turns out it's not elementary at all



Publisher Focus Home Interactive Developer Frogwares  
Price £39.99 Players 1 Genre Puzzle Age Rating 16 Website  
sherlockholmes-thegame.com Twitter @FocusHome  
Facebook www.facebook.com/FocusInteractive

If you're not one of the six people who actually enjoy this

kind of game, then *The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes* must confuse you a lot. There are no guns, you can't headshot anything and, despite the endless amounts of conversations, there aren't even any stats to grind or roles to play.

It's a hidden object game, basically. Once more popularised thanks to the poxy iPad, this genre of videogame puts you gently into a series of enclosed spaces where you must hunt down every item and – if you're lucky – solve a few puzzles.

The voice acting is awful, the controls are clumsy and the puzzles often fail to provide you any logical clue to help you solve them. But if you like puzzle games then you'll find mild enjoyment through each of the challenges themselves and, truth be told, even tracking down each of the clues can feel bizarrely gratifying. Even the world of Sherlock Holmes is

– dare we say – keenly observed, with references to previous escapades from the illustrious history of the world's greatest detective.

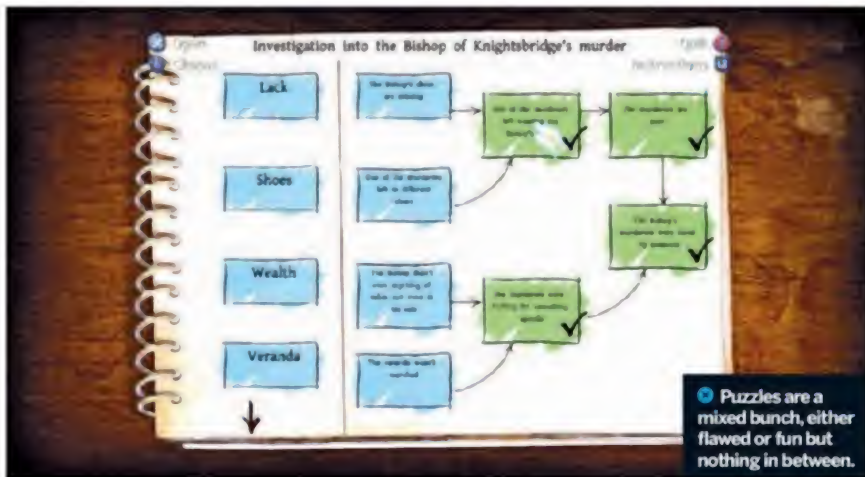
None of this actually makes *The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes* a good game, of course: it's still very awkward to play and the endless yapping can make getting to the puzzles a bit of a chore. If you ever find it for a tenner and like this sort of thing then you'll probably get value from it, but everyone else should just stick to *Call Of Duty*.

Adam Barnes

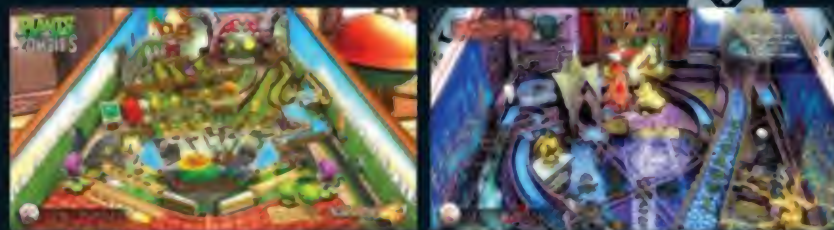
## VERDICT

We could be more harsh to *The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes* than we have been, but there is certainly **some enjoyment to be found here. It won't be jumpstarting the long-dead puzzle genre any time soon, let's put it that way.**

55%



# PSN reviews



## ZEN PINBALL 2 The king is back. All hail the king!

Publisher Sony Computer Entertainment Developer Zen Studios Price Free (individual table costs) Players 1-4 Genre Pinball



**OTHER STUDIOS PLEASE** take note on how to do things like Zen Studios has: release your sequel/update for free, allow users to import their existing purchases into the new version and collate all the existing available content into one handy menu. Oh, and make it shinier and the ball physics better – though only if that applies to the game you're making.

Because when you do all of that, you're left with the finest pinball game we've seen in a long time, but in a newer, shinier, updatedier fashion. The big table addition is a *Plants Vs Zombies* one, and it's another example of Zen doing what it does best: it's silly, it's tonally perfect, and it's a hell of a lot of fun. Now leave us alone – time to get some high scores.

90%



## INFAMOUS COLLECTION

TOP TIP: pick the evil path, unless you're a fool

Publisher Sony Computer Entertainment Developer In-house Price £28.49 Players 1 Genre Sandbox



**IT MIGHT SEEM** like a large chunk of cash for two-and-a-half games, but... wait, no it doesn't. It's about ten quid per excellent *inFamous* – the second one being a game of longevity even we didn't realise at the time – and an extra seven or eight for the fine spin-off DLC adventure *Festival Of Blood*. But are they worth playing still, in this world of 2012, nearly 2013, where we all live in hover cars and eat food in pill form? Yes, of course it is. The original holds up well – ignoring the inability to scale chain-link fences – and the second is brilliant fun. The DLC adds genuinely good vampire powers and, well – if you don't have it, get it.

85%



## DOUBLE DRAGON NEON

Do you remember the Eighties? DO YOU?

Publisher WayForward Technologies Developer Majesco Entertainment Price £8.49 Players 1-2 Genre Beat-'em-up



**REBOOTING THE CLASSIC** *Double Dragon* franchise is something we should be well behind, and doing it in such a wonderful visual style – it's so damn Eighties – really got our hopes up.

Turns out *Double Dragon Neon* is actually worse than the original game, and the original game hasn't exactly stood the test of time that well. Slow-moving, clunkily-controlling characters waddle around the screen half-heartedly jabbing at hundreds of enemies who might decide to hit you with an unblockable, unavoidable attack that saps a quarter of your health bar before... sigh. Who cares? This is just a pretty bad game. Avoid it, stick with *Castle Crashers* or something actually good.

37%





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

# NBA 2K13

The best sports game you'll never play (FIX THAT NOW)



## DETAILS

**Publisher**  
2K Sports  
**Developer**  
Visual Concepts  
**Price**  
£44.99  
**Players**  
1-4  
**Genre**  
Sports  
**Age Rating**  
PEGI 3  
**Website**  
2ksports.com  
**Twitter**  
@2KSports  
**Facebook**  
facebook.com/nba2k



This is the best sports game you'll never play. Honestly, it is. Because let's be honest, and you can be honest with us, you'll never play this. The attention has always been on the battle between *FIFA* and *PES* yet quietly, lurking in the background, the *NBA 2K* series has been improving to the point where we're now saying buy it. Even if you don't like basketball.

If you're still reading, bravo for being open-minded! There are a few caveats to get out the way first. The controls are tricky. It takes a while to unpick the playability from the layers of moves, lay-ups, spins and alley oops assigned to each button. The new features also hints towards a series without much room left to manoeuvre – the ability to create your own shoes? Thanks but no thanks.

The good news is that *NBA 2K13* does everything else right. It's particularly embarrassing looking at season mode in other sports games after spending time in *NBA 2K13*'s career – rookie tryouts, draft interviews, press conferences, general manager showdowns, even being trolled on Twitter. The variety is impressive but it's the constant feedback on everything you do that really sucks you in.

On the court, things only get better. At its absolute core, basketball is a game of physicality and quick movement. *NBA 2K13* is a master of both. It's a joy threading your players through a tight defence and watching the animation as your tiny point guard reacts to every bump and elbow he takes on the way to the basket. It's also why defending is so much fun. Those with distant memories of *NBA Live* games might remember defending as running after the player with the ball and stabbing at the steal button but defending here demands concentration, smart gambles and persistence. Most importantly, it's rewarding, the physicality and feedback encouraging you to put pressure on the ball-handler rather than half-heartedly waiting for your turn to attack again.

MyTeam also makes up for the lack of progress elsewhere. It's another card-game-as-sports-game idea, where you buy packs of players to form your scrubby team before earning credits to buy better players, but it taps into the OCD need for constant improvement within every competitive gamer. Better yet, it also solves the problem of coming up against endless Miami Heat and LA Lakers online, as every player will have their own original mix of faces that they've put together. In short, this is, as mentioned, the best sports game you'll never play. It's well worth a gamble even if you don't like basketball, so you can say that *NBA 2K13* is the best sports game you *have* played.

Ryan King

## VERDICT

Physical, fast and brutal, *NBA 2K13* captures the appeal of basketball and lavishes it with engaging modes. Even if you're not a basketball fan, this sports title is easily strong enough to convert you.

88%



Even non-basketball fans will appreciate the level of detail.



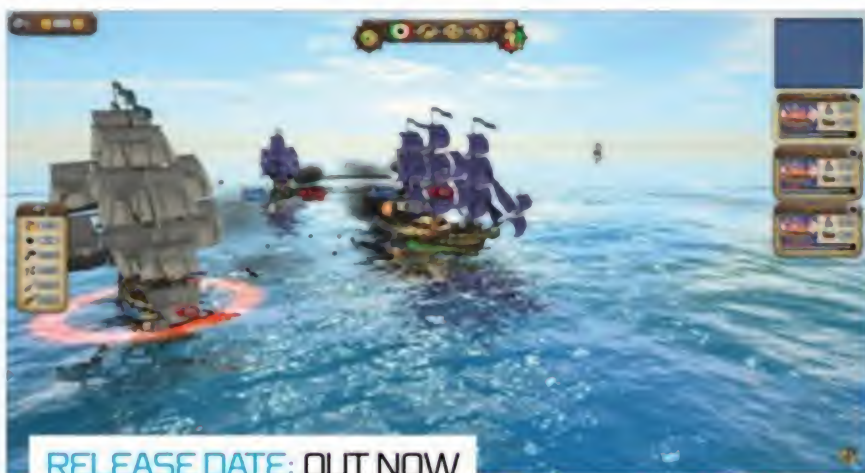
We wish this had a Space Jam DLC pack.



*NBA 2K13* taps into the genuine love of the sport.







RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

# Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants

Avast! It's time to pillage, plunder and... economise?



Publisher Kalypso Media Developer Gaming Minds Studios  
Price £34.99 Players 1 Genre Strategy Age Rating 12+ Website  
www.port-royale3.com/uk Twitter @kalypsomediauk Facebook  
facebook.com/PortRoyale3

For followers of the series, *Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants*

is familiar territory. In fact, it's so familiar you'd forget it was a new game if it wasn't for the controller in your hand. Other than its introduction to consoles, and (admittedly lovely) revamped graphics, the third instalment in this economic strategy series is simply a regurgitation of its predecessors.

If you're new to the game then there's a lot to wrap your head around, like how to trade properly, what all the little icons mean, and why you're doing this in the first place. Lucky for you, the disembodied head of your mentor Pedro de Vega regularly appears at the top of the screen, offering advice and encouragement in all his poorly-lip-synced glory.

Still, the extensive in-game assistance (objectives are also accompanied by an optional video tutorial) doesn't quite manage to overcome the game's complexity. In order to achieve your main objective – winning the heart of a comely Hispanic wench – you must either master a deceptively difficult trading system (Trader campaign) or become a naval



top-dog (Adventurer campaign). Disappointingly, the latter isn't nearly as exciting as it sounds. Sea battles have awkward controls and generally feel pointless, as their outcome is largely predestined by your 'combat strength' anyway. The real challenge lies in the role of Trader, where devising efficient supply and demand schemes tests both patience and skill but it's still not enough to save you from slowly sinking into boredom.

Rhiannon Rees

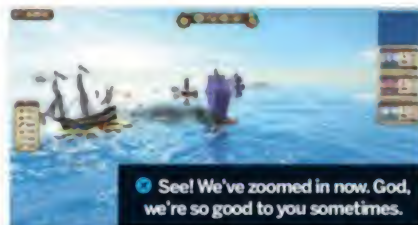
## VERDICT

A slow-paced strategy game ideal for those with saintly patience and a penchant for tactical play, the 17th Century and maps of the Caribbean. If you don't meet these criteria, chances are you'll get bored after an hour or two.

54%



It looks nicer when you zoom in! Honestly. This is not a lie.



See! We've zoomed in now. God, we're so good to you sometimes.

# PSN reviews



## GRAND THEFT AUTO III

One more time in Liberty City

Publisher Rockstar Games Developer Rockstar North Price £7.99  
Players 1 Genre Sandbox



**NOT AN ESPECIALLY** high-end re-release, *GTA III* shuffles onto the slowly growing list of PSN classics, and still illustrates why Rockstar's original 3D take on the series was so influential. Sure, picking up a hooker while your car unsexily jolts backwards and forwards isn't quite as arousing or technically refined as it used to be, but Liberty City itself is still a bloody brilliant open world, so passionately put together by Rockstar North. For many people, this is where their *GTA* adventure began – where they first played a game they could basically live in, and owning it on PS3 has an oddly lovely sense of coming full circle.

90%



## NIGHTS INTO DREAMS...

More classic Sega goodness

Publisher Sega Developer In-house Price £6.49 Players 1 Genre Platformer



**NIGHTS IS ONE** of those games you always hear players from the Nineties drone on about, a neat little one-off on Sega Saturn that Sonic Team made in the time before its titular franchise was a bit of a joke. With psychedelic visuals and a kind of relentless gameplay style that is undoubtedly unique, *NiGHTS* is sort of like a mixture between a simple 2D flight simulator and typical collectathons. It's an acquired taste, sure, and is most likely to satisfy hardcore Sega platformer fans rather than anyone else at this point, but for those who do engage with it, that wonderful feeling of flying around as well as the love given to this HD remake make it a worthy purchase.

75%



## FINAL FANTASY III

Only obsessives need apply

Publisher Square Enix Developer In-house Price £11.99 Players 1 Genre RPG



**PERHAPS THE LEAST** convincing of the older *Final Fantasy* games, only die-hard completists need this boring retro remake on their PSP. Though the production values are typically nice, *Final Fantasy III* has all the hallmarks of an out-of-date entry in the series – a dull story about crystals, bizarre difficulty spikes and mechanics that aren't effectively explained. Perhaps you've longingly eyed *Final Fantasy III* on the PlayStation Store, since it's technically the last title you need to have a complete collection of *I-IX* on your PSP, but for £11.99 you'd be massively short-changed. Evidently, the series' best days were yet to come.

44%



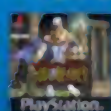
# THE BEST PSONE CLASSICS ON VITA

Has nostalgia blinded us or were the glory days actually great? Play tries some of the best PSone Classics on Vita



## LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER

■ Issue Reviewed: 50  
■ PSN: £4.79 ■ Score: 92%



To save himself from death, Raziel is forced to trade off roast dinners and mixed grills for souls and essences. In this journey for revenge, Raziel must absorb the strength of his fallen enemies, then come face to face with his tormentor, Kain, in a battle to the death.

Fortunately, Vita handles the scale of *Soul Reaver* pretty well; allowing the use of rear touch to pan the camera, as well as analog control. Vita's screen is slightly small for the game at stretched fit but put aside that and the usual dated camera frustrations and combat gripes, *LOK:SR* remains a deep, engrossing title that weaves a intricate, intimate yarn.

**GAME RATING TODAY:** x x x x x  
**PLAYABILITY ON VITA:** x x x x x

## CRASH TEAM RACING

■ Issue Reviewed: 56  
■ PSN: £2.99 ■ Score: 86%



It's one thing giving Mario a licence and registration, but it's something else chucking a manic marsupial behind a wheel. Naughty Dog's final instalment in the *Crash* series took a lot of cues from Nintendo's luck-induced drive-'em-up and surprisingly, worked quite well. In fact, this feels more at home on Vita than it ever did on PSone.

Unfortunately, the steering does feel slightly off, which seems to be a combination of both Vita controls and in-game physics, and the graphics are blurred and blocky. While you'll never want to trade in a shell for a nitro rocket; for pure, on-the-go fun, this one tops the podium in the current Classics range.

**GAME RATING TODAY:** x x x x x  
**PLAYABILITY ON VITA:** x x x x x



## FINAL FANTASY VII

■ Issue Reviewed: 27 ■ PSN: £7.99 ■ Score: 93%



Musing gaming aficionados have comfortably declared *FFVII* the greatest of all-time; reckoning it boils down to interesting characters, shocking twists, rad hairstyles and great gameplay. As one of those fans, we're happy to say our enthusiasm was reinvigorated through Vita. Zoomed in, the graphics are a perfect fit for the portable. *FFVII* handles perfectly despite no analog support. Even disc swapping is a doddle with the tap of a button. True, it no longer feels indicative of its monstrous budget, but *FFVII* remains one of the finest RPGs of all time, and should be experienced by everyone, whether they're quenching retro thirst or finally removing it from the pile of shame.

**GAME RATING TODAY:** x x x x x  
**PLAYABILITY ON VITA:** x x x x x







## SILENT HILL

■ Issue Reviewed: 51  
■ PSN: £5.49 ■ Score: 84%



Atmosphere was a major driving force behind *Silent Hill*, and amazingly, most of that's still intact.

Jerky camera angles while navigating tight corners. Despair and loneliness only interrupted by a crackling radio, reminding players that abominations thrive in the fog. With headphones in and lights out, *SH* has still got it.

As it turns out, despite most of the monsters lacking compared to their PS2 counterparts, *SH* turns out to be a marvellous mobile game, though rear-touch isn't the best choice for aiming weapons. This is a real irritation as you're forced to find the tiniest sweet spot on the large space. Fortunately, the other control mapping is superb. Handheld horror matches the Vita perfectly.

**RATING:** ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖

**PLAYABILITY:** ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖



## CRASH BANDICOOT

■ Issue Reviewed: 13 ■ PSN: £2.99 ■ Score: 84%



Quirky Crash Bandicoot became more than just a mascot. Resembling Warner's Tasmanian Devil, he burst on the scene at the PSone's launch with a zany, fully-formed 3D world that inspired a generation.

Vita is as perfect a platform for the marsupial as the PSone was before it. *Crash Bandicoot's* charming, pick-up-and-play quality is a brilliant fit for the handheld, and surprisingly, the gameplay remains remarkably fresh. Thanks to a vibrant palette and some smoothing, even N.Sanity Beach gleams and sparkles as new.

Aside from confining saves to bonus-stages and the handheld hiccups that presents; box-smashing, jumping on podgy warrior blokes and running away from large boulders is still head-spinningly good fun.

**GAME RATING TODAY:** ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖

**PLAYABILITY ON VITA:** ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖

## TOMB RAIDER

■ Issue Reviewed: 14  
■ PSN: £4.79 ■ Score: 94%



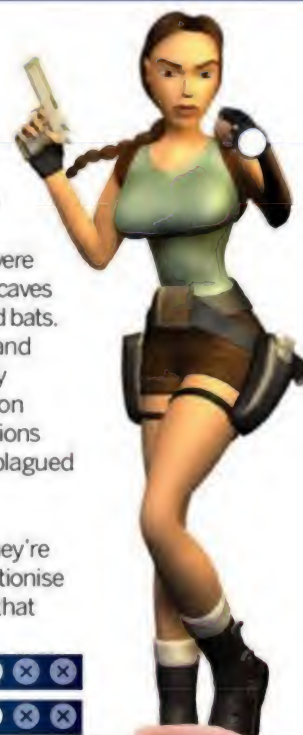
*Tomb Raider* broke into the action adventure world in 1996. In those simpler times, Lara's adventures were defined by the exploration of dark caves and the merciless shooting of bears, tigers and bats.

Sadly, after the likes of *Assassin's Creed* and *Prince Of Persia*, those excursions are wholly shallow. Lara can't wall-run; she'll fall feebly on her face. The lack of analog makes most actions clumsy, and the hideous environments are plagued with clipping issues.

Playing with Ms Croft has its moments – side-stepping with rear-touch is neat – but they're far and few-between. *Tomb Raider* did revolutionise the genre, but replaying it these days makes that hard to believe.

**GAME RATING TODAY:** ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖

**PLAYABILITY ON VITA:** ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖



## RAYMAN 2: THE GREAT ESCAPE

■ Issue Reviewed: 67 ■ PSN: £3.99 ■ Score: 82%



*Origins* wasn't the first, truly great *Rayman* game. Years back, our arm-less hero (somehow) swashbuckled with robo-pirates on the high seas. Unfortunately, those memories weren't as fond as we'd hoped: though that's more the fault of the PSone port.

*Rayman 2* uses every part of the Vita; rear-touch operates the camera and doubles as a jump button. The right analog can also be used to fire pellets. Unfortunately, it's all unnecessarily convoluted and responsiveness is almost non-existent. Add in ruthless, illogical camera angles and any pangs of nostalgia soon walk the plank. There really is a classic here somewhere; it's just hidden under bad mechanics and blotchy pixels.

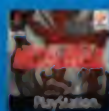
**GAME RATING TODAY:** ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖

**PLAYABILITY ON VITA:** ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖



## METAL GEAR SOLID

■ Issue Reviewed: 42 ■ PSN: £7.99 ■ Score: 97%



Whenever the word 'remake' pops up, shy of an extremely rare Gamecube version, *Metal Gear Solid* conveniently hides itself away in a cardboard box. Fortunately, you don't need it – *MGS* is still a majestic experience on Vita, showing how timeless Kojima's design is.

Analog support is spot-on, except when pressing Snake into cover and rear touch is convenient for cycling through menus. Like its PlayStation 2 successors, *MGS* feels like a near-perfect fit for the Vita's functionality, and there's a pleasing sense of closure in having all three games available right there on the console's menu screen.

Thankfully, the story is still a magnificent one, too, featuring an ensemble of characters as memorable as any we've ever met on PlayStation.

**GAME RATING TODAY:** ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖

**PLAYABILITY ON VITA:** ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖ ✖





## TOP TEN PSN RETRO



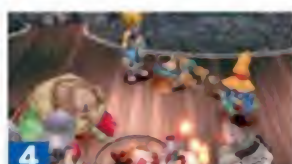
1 Metal Gear Solid



2 Resident Evil 2



3 God Hand



4 Final Fantasy IX



5 Streets Of Rage 2



6 The Secret Of Monkey Island



7 Driver



8 Final Fight: Double Impact



9 Sonic The Hedgehog 2



10 Crash Bandicoot

## RETRO ON PSN... They're old but are they any good?



# X-Com: Enemy Unknown



- Release date October 1995 • Publisher MicroProse • Developer Mythos Games/MicroProse
- Games it influenced XCOM: Enemy Unknown (2012), Dark Souls, a thousand SRPGs

### THOSE WHO KNOW WHY X-Com: Enemy Unknown is such an important game

are the same people who understand the revamped, hyphen-less version of the game developed by Firaxis is in the right hands. Listen to lead designer Jake Solomon for any period of time and a fan of the original will quickly see he is a man who has lived through the paranoia of where the aliens will strike next, the fear of a chryssalid assault, the sense of betrayal when a nation signs a pact with the invaders and removes all its funding from you and – ultimately, eventually – the combination of relief and triumph when you take the fight back to those xenomorph bastards' staging ground (spoiler: it's Mars) and blow up the Alien Brain with their own bloody massive plasma weapons.

But anyway – *X-Com: Enemy Unknown*. A 17-year-old game that still gets us excited: one that looked old-fashioned even when it came out, plays very slowly and is so difficult it has gone down in legend as 'something that is really difficult'. But the game known as *UFO: Enemy Unknown* and *X-Com: UFO Defense* elsewhere in

the world is home to an intoxicating mix of strategy and management. Yes, that is a real selling point.

It's almost two games in one – dealing with planning your base and its layout, hiring and firing staff, researching stolen alien technologies and *selling corpses* (never forget to sell the corpses). Then, once you've downed a UFO, approached an already-landed one, found an alien base or scrambled to a terror site it turns into one of the greatest turn-based strategy games ever made. When you're this fragile, when the aliens can cause so much damage so easily, when every single move you make *matters this much* it becomes a compelling, utterly terrifying experience. And as you progress – as you turn your band of newbie soldiers into heavily-armed killing machines – your confidence grows



**Sectoid autopsy**  
The autopsy reveals ventral digestive organs and a single structure. The brain and eyes are very well developed. The structure suggests genetic similarity or mutation. The most notable and most common to have little fingers. The only thing between the fingers and the big pink, except for a small space. There are no reproductive organs, and no data as to how this species can reproduce. They are much.

**The best part of killing aliens?**  
Defiling their corpses, obviously.



immeasurably. It's a slow burn, but it's totally worth it.

It's confusing as hell and newcomers would be well suited to look up any number of quickstart guides available on the web to get themselves going. This is very much a pre-tutorial world and, judging by a lesser mortal's attempt in this very office to play the game for the first time, it's a hard one to get your head around. But beyond that (admittedly huge) stumbling block you'll find a game that has aged wonderfully; it's still immensely satisfying to play; it's still terrifying when it needs to be; and it's still so hilariously difficult you can't even be mad at it. Just remember: *X-Com* hates you – you have to hate it right back.

**WHAT WE SAID: Issue 6 • 82%**

"Compelling turn-based strategy adventure."



This – if this happens to you – is the point where you run away. Fast.





## NEVER COMING TO PSN #11

# Mad Maestro!

- Release March 2002
- Developer Desert Productions



THE MORE WE look back at the days of the PS2, the more we realise it was a wonderful time for games: development was so easy and cheap that developers could make games where you play as a conductor and use the face buttons (pressed at varying pressures) to direct the music played, and they *didn't* have to feature insurgent threats, killstreaks or any sort of licensed character. Or online passes. Better days? Maybe not. Days? Yes.

*Mad Maestro* was the thing we were talking about up there, by the way. It's a real game where you really play as the titular insane conductor (insane in the non-stabby way) and use the DualShock 2's pressure-sensitive buttons as an actual in-game mechanic. Mad indeed.

But even though PSN is the ideal place for a game like this to have a second wind, we're unlikely to ever see it come out. We say this not out of sadness, but out of the need to challenge Square Enix (it was originally published by Eidos): we *dare* you to release *Mad Maestro* on PSN. Mainly because we've lost our office copy.



It doesn't actually look that mad.



## WE COULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT

# Crime Life: Gang Wars



WHEN PEOPLE REFER to the likes of *Saints Row* as 'a poor man's *GTA*', they clearly haven't played *Crime Life: Gang Wars*. This – the last game released by developers Hothouse Creations before the studio was closed (we assume immediately after the first poor sod who bought the game played it) – is an absolutely destitute pauper's *GTA*.

We're just hoping, really, that the involvement of D12 (remember them?) would mean prohibitive licensing issues stopping the game from ever seeing a digital release, or from being mentioned ever again in any context ever even in a retro section of an excellent PlayStation magazine. Oh wait.

In fact, we hope these same licensing issues cause the game to be hunted down en masse, thrown into a pile and blown up with all the world's munitions, thus solving both the issue of the game existing and the problem we have with wars being fought all the time. In your death, *Crime Life: Gang Wars*, you could bring peace to the world – do the right thing.



## PS2 CLASSICS REVIEW – RED FACTION II

# Shed the Red, put the Faction in traction



**RED FACTION II** has Jason Statham in it as a character – that's the best thing about it. The worst thing about it is – aside from most elements of it – the fact it is no longer set on Mars. Why would you still be the 'Red' Faction and not be on Mars? And why is Lance Henriksen suddenly evil towards the end? Oh wait, spoiler.

Anyway, *Red Faction II* is what happens when a development team is told to make a game appeal to more people. They take away the more overt science fiction elements (Mars) and turn it into a could-be-any-time near-future Earth setting. It became a boring first-person shooter with a bit of star quality behind it – well made, but ultimately characterless and totally forgettable. Basically it was the *Call Of Duty* of its day looooooool.

This was sort of repeated in *Red Faction: Armageddon*, which also dropped many of the *Red* elements and turned it into a blandathon. You can get the original game – aged but still creative and fun – and *Red Faction: Guerrilla* – a laugh riot – on PSN, so get those instead.

This sequel to one of our favourite PS2 FPS titles is available on the US Store, by the way – we're not being foolish including it here.

## RETRO GAMES WE SAID WE WANT TO PLAY AGAIN BUT PROBABLY WON'T



### Lifeforce Tenka

Saddened by the death of Psygnosis (well, Studio Liverpool), we rooted out some classic titles developed or published by the studio. Then didn't play them. Like *Lifeforce Tenka*. Because really, why would we bother? It wasn't great when it came out.



### Rollcage Stage II

Then we moved on to *Rollcage Stage II*, where we thought it would be nice to see if the tremendous sense of speed we felt the first time we played it still applied. It did not. We played no more.



### Team Buddies

Ha! They swear! How edgy and adult a game this was! Back when we were 14 when it first came out, at least. Now it's just vaguely embarrassing. We did still want to play it, but someone selling it for £300 online sort of put us off.



### Colony Wars: Red Sun

The third in the series and the most technologically advanced, we actually did go out of our way to buy this. Then we couldn't be bothered actually playing it. Oh wait – we're going to do a Psygnosis video for the DVD. Ignore all this.



# RESIDENT EVIL 6

## HOW TO FIND THE SERPENT EMBLEMS

Need help smashing the hidden emblems in Capcom's survival-action-horror-adventure? That's why we're giving you a headstart with these locations...



**1** In the first chapter, you'll head up some stairs and past closed shutters with a window to your right. Just after that corridor, look to the left for the first emblem.



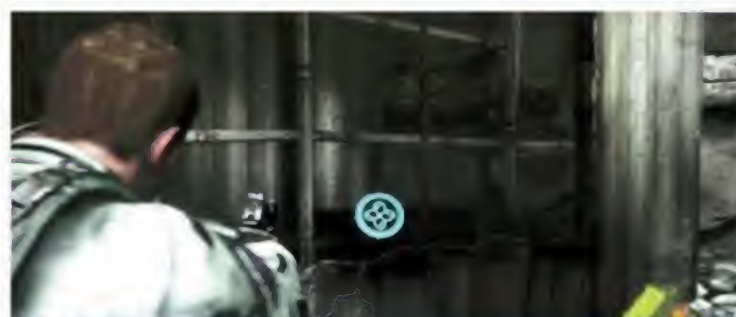
**2** Further on, you'll come to an alleyway full of J'avo. When they're cleared, the next room will have two wooden boxes. The emblem will be behind the box on the right.



**3** When you shoot the J'avo from the rooftops, jump to the opposite roof and climb up. Look left to the nearest scaffolding in the distance. The emblem is nestling on top.



**4** As you clear the Chinese market, you'll notice a gaping hole in the building. Turn around and head straight forward and you'll notice an emblem poking through a market stand.



**5** In the second chapter, When Finn is setting bombs, head all the way to the right and you'll see this emblem through the iron bars of one of the concrete buildings.





**6** As after you pass the playground, your team will head right to the doors that you and Piers need to open. Instead, head left to find an easy-to-spot emblem.



**7** After you blow up the helicopter, head into the building and pass the mahjong table to your left. Enter the bedroom and the emblem is lying on the bed.



**8** When the helicopter has been dealt with at the Chinese seafood restaurant, turn right and look out to the construction work to see the emblem waiting to be shot.



**9** During the driving section, you'll come to a bit where you have to shoot J'avo waiting to ambush you. The emblem can be found on the top part of the bus in the background.



**10** Inside the airplane hangar is (surprisingly enough) a plane. Hop inside the plane and turn left. You'll find the emblem in the cockpit.



**11** Further on in the hangar, you'll find a valve to turn which opens up a ladder. Climb up it and look through the stairs ahead to see a serpent emblem.



**12** When Piers is setting bombs and you're giving him cover from a jet, the emblem is tucked in the debris between the first and second bomb. It's hard to spot.



**13** When you boost Piers over the gap and he shuts down the huge ventilator fan, look through it and at the ceiling to see another serpent emblem.



**14** In the underwater tunnel, when Piers pulls you through the final collapsing gap as the door closes, turn back on yourself and you'll see another emblem.



# PLAY<sup>3</sup> PlayList

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

## TEAM PICKS PILES OF SHAME



### top five RYAN KING

- 1 Mafia II
- 2 Ace Combat: Assault Horizon
- 3 The Darkness II
- 4 Final Fantasy XIII
- 5 inFamous 2



### top five IAN DRANSFIELD

- 1 Dark Souls
- 2 Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning
- 3 Just Cause 2
- 4 Battlefield 3 (online)
- 5 PixelJunk Shooter 2



### top five SAM ROBERTS

- 1 Batman: Arkham City
- 2 The Sly Collection
- 3 Red Dead Redemption
- 4 Gravity Rush
- 5 Resident Evil 6



### top five ANDY SALTER

- 1 Skyrim (obviously)
- 2 Thief: Deadly Shadows
- 3 S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Clear Sky
- 4 Borderlands
- 5 Fallout: New Vegas

## PS3 LISTING



game	issue	score
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	43%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Aliens vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	217	60%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	203	27%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%

More than enough additions to take the Assassin's Creed formula into modern classic territory.

Assassin's Creed Revelations	212	75%
Asura's Wrath	216	67%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%

Rocksteady's sequel to the excellent Arkham Asylum is a serious contender for game of the year.

Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%

Single-player is fairly impressive but take it online and it's bordering on genius. This is quite possibly the best shooter on PS3 today.

Battlefield 3	212	88%
Battleship	219	44%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Binary Domain	216	70%
Bionic Commando	179	82%

BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	163	43%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%

Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Borderlands	185	80%
Borderlands 2	223	90%

Borderlands 2 is an excellent lesson in sequel-making and is easily one of 2012's best games.

game	issue	score
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Carnival Island	213	53%
Cars 2	208	68%
Catherine	215	61%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
The Club	163	80%
Colin McRae: DIRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DIRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	37%
Create	199	71%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crysis 2	204	72%
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
Damnation	181	38%
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	37%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Darkness II	215	76%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
Darksiders II	221	86%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Or Alive 5	223	78%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
DiRT 3	206	85%
DiRT Showdown	219	84%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%

The point where the Dead Space series stepped up and became something to be genuinely excited about.

Worries unfounded. Fun: lots of it. True Deus Ex experience: confirmed. Boss battles: bloody awful.

game	issue	score
DJ Hero	186	91%
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	32%
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dragon's Dogma	218	48%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	215	75%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
EyePet: Move	197	84%
FI 2010	197	86%
FI 2011	211	71%
FI 2012	223	79%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
F.E.A.R. 3	208	60%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
FIFA 11	197	91%
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA 13	223	82%
FIFA Street (2012)	217	74%
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
The Fight	199	42%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
G-Force	183	59%
Game Of Thrones	220	39%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%

WARNING: The latest addition to Bethesda's superb franchise will seriously damage your social life.

Fallout 3 lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience.



# This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Resident Evil 6 <b>PS3</b>	88%	Max Anarchy (Import) <b>PS3</b>	70%	Sound Shapes <b>PSV</b>	88%
Borderlands 2 <b>PS3</b>	90%	Madden NFL 13 <b>PS3</b>	86%	LittleBigPlanet <b>PSV</b>	93%
Tekken Tag Tournament 2 <b>PS3</b>	90%	Dead Or Alive 5 <b>PS3</b>	78%	Counter-Strike: Global Offensive <b>PSN</b>	89%
FIFA 13 <b>PS3</b>	82%	Pro Evolution Soccer 2013 <b>PS3</b>	88%	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD <b>PSN</b>	73%
Rocksmith <b>PS3</b>	78%	NHL 13 <b>PS3</b>	74%	Rock Band Blitz <b>PSN</b>	80%
F1 2012 <b>PS3</b>	79%	Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron <b>PS3</b>	73%	Tokyo Jungle <b>PSN</b>	81%
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII <b>PS3</b>	37%	Agarest: Generations Of War 2 <b>PS3</b>	43%	The Walking Dead: Episode 3 <b>PSN</b>	86%

game	issue	score
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	60%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
God Of War III	190	88%
<b>God Of War Collection*</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>93%</b>
Two of the greatest PS2 action games of all time come together at a bargain price. Essential purchase.		
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	63%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
<b>Grand Theft Auto IV</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>98%</b>
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
<b>GTA: Episodes From Liberty City</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>94%</b>
<b>Guitar Hero III</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>90%</b>
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
<b>Guitar Hero World Tour</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>95%</b>
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	200	21%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2	208	37%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
<b>Heavy Rain</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>94%</b>
Heavy Rain: Move Edition	198	70%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Homefront	203	69%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
Ice Age 4: Continental Drift: Arctic Games	222	40%
<b>ico &amp; shadow Of The Colossus Classics HD</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>94%</b>
Largely ignored when they were first released, gamers can now enjoy these wonderful games in brilliant HD.		
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Inversion	220	49%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	82%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JASF: Jane's Advanced Strike Fighters	217	30%
John Daly's ProStroke Golf	197	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
<b>Killzone 2</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>93%</b>
Killzone 3	202	80%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	70%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	76%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
<b>LA Noire</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>91%</b>
Not perfect but Rockstar's new IP introduces pioneering facial-capture technology and interesting gameplay.		

game	issue	score
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Batman 2	221	80%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
<b>LittleBigPlanet</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>94%</b>
<b>LittleBigPlanet 2</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>96%</b>
An amazing game and something to get involved with even if you can't create your own stuff.		
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	72%
London 2012	221	45%
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	52%
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Madden NFL 13	223	86%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Max Anarchy (Import)	223	70%
Max Payne 3	219	77%
<b>Mass Effect 2</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>97%</b>
<b>Mass Effect 3</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>93%</b>
Despite having arguably one of the worst endings in videogame history, this is still a must for any serious collection.		
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Medieval Moves	213	47%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
<b>Metal Gear Solid 4</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>92%</b>
Not the final Metal Gear Solid game after all then. Still brilliant though, and still largely incomprehensible.		
<b>Metal Gear Solid HD Collection</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>91%</b>
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
<b>ModNation Racers</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>90%</b>
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
MotoGP 10/11	204	64%
<b>MotorStorm</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>92%</b>
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
<b>MotorStorm: Pacific Rift</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>93%</b>
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX vs ATV: Alive	206	42%
MX vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
naïf'd	201	61%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%

game	issue	score
Naruto Shippuden: Ultimate Ninja Storm Generations	217	53%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
<b>Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>91%</b>
Hot Pursuit is one of the best arcade racers of all time - pure, unadulterated bliss in game form.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	213	63%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	215	39%
Nier	192	54%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
NHL 12	210	78%
NHL 13	223	74%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	63%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
<b>The Orange Box</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>93%</b>
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PES 2012	210	74%
Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension	211	66%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
<b>Portal 2</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>95%</b>
Another exceptional realisation from Valve, gamers are going to be talking about Portal 2 for a long time to come.		
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Prototype 2	219	75%
Puma After Hours Athletics	214	58%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
<b>Ratchet &amp; Clank Trilogy HD</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>88%</b>
Rayman Origins	212	80%

\*denotes import review

## TOP TEN CO-OP GAMES



1 Borderlands 2



2 Any of the Lego games



3 Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker



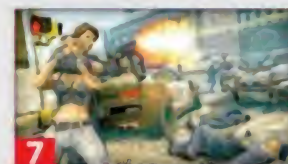
4 Dark Souls



5 Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception



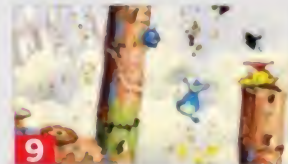
6 Portal 2



7 Saints Row: The Third



8 Battlefield 3



9 Rayman Origins



10 Resident Evil 6



## DOWNLOAD THESE PS2 GAME EDITION



### GOD HAND

83%, Play 216

One of the most difficult, but rewarding, games ever to grace PS2, *God Hand* is as mad as a small, warm bag of irritated possums. It's also brilliant, and available on PSN.



### PSYCHONAUTS

87%, Play 132

Not available on the EU PSN at the time of writing, you'll have to set up a US account to bag Double Fine's platformer masterclass. But do that, because it's ace.



### TWISTED METAL: BLACK

87%, Play 82

This popped up on PSN with little fanfare, which is why it deserves to be highlighted by us and you deserve to be told to buy it. Because, like, it's really good and stuff. We're professionals. We know.



### DEUS EX: THE CONSPIRACY

83%, Play 219

Not the best version of the game by a long shot, but it's still *Deus Ex* so it's still worth playing. One of the most intelligent and well thought out games ever made, pretty much.



### MAX PAYNE

83%, Play 87

Just like *Deus Ex*, *Max Payne* is trumped by the PC version – sorry, it's just a fact in your face. Still, the original game of the angry man slowly floating about shooting things is surprisingly fun to this day. So do that.

game	issue	score
<b>Red Dead Redemption</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>92%</b>
Relocates the familiar GTA formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.		
Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare	199	87%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resident Evil 6	223	88%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
<b>Resistance 2</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>90%</b>
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	67%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	64%
<b>Rock Band</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>94%</b>
<b>Rock Band 2</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>96%</b>
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rocks'n'Roll	223	78%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
Rune Factory Oceans	220	51%
R.U.S.E.	197	82%
The Saboteur	187	67%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
SBK Generations	220	51%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	216	52%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK Generations	220	54%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
<b>Sega Rally</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>92%</b>
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
The Shoot	199	76%
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	81%
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
The Simpsons Game	160	82%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%
SingStar	159	80%
SingStar Guitar	199	70%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	195	80%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Sleeping Dogs	222	80%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Sniper Elite V2	218	52%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Sorcery	219	76%
<b>SoulCalibur IV</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>94%</b>
<b>SoulCalibur V</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>80%</b>
Spec Ops: The Line	220	59%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
<b>Split/Second: Velocity</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>90%</b>
Sports Champions	196	83%
SSX	216	45%
Starhawk	219	81%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Start The Party!	196	72%

game	issue	score
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
<b>Street Fighter IV</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>95%</b>
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	83%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
<b>Super Street Fighter IV</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>90%</b>
Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Syndicate	216	78%
Tales Of Graces f	222	77%
<b>Tekken 6</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>94%</b>
Tekken Hybrid	213	79%
<b>Tekken Tag Tournament 2</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>90%</b>
Far from being the sideshow attraction the word 'spin-off' might suggest, Tekken Tag Tournament 2 is actually pretty damn brilliant.		
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	60%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	61%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters	204	65%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13	217	70%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.	177	75%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	78%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	45%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	73%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UEFA Euro 2008	165	62%
<b>UFC Undisputed 2009</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>90%</b>
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	215	82%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
<b>Uncharted 2: Among Thieves</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>96%</b>
<b>Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>90%</b>
Fans of the series won't be disappointed as Drake returns with some exceptional set pieces and superb action.		
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
<b>Vanguard</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>93%</b>
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	180	80%
<b>Virtua Tennis 3</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>91%</b>
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%


game	issue	score
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
<b>Wet</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>41%</b>
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
World Snooker Championship 2007	151	56%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WSC REAL09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%
WSC Real 11	204	69%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of WrestleMania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2009	173	74%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2010	185	77%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2011	199	63%
WWE '12	212	50%
X-Blades	178	54%
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	60%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yoostar 2: In The Movies	204	60%

## PS VITA LISTING



A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	217	64%
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	85%
Escape Plan	216	81%
FIFA Football	216	80%
Gravity Rush	219	86%
Hustle Kings	216	81%
<b>LittleBigPlanet</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>93%</b>
If the community is up to the task, LBP PS Vita's create mode has massive amounts of potential.		
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	85%
MGS HD Collection	221	70%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	59%
Mortal Kombat	219	83%
MotorStorm RC	217	81%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Puddle	222	82%
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	215	52%
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	54%
Ridge Racer	216	48%
Sound Shapes	223	88%
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Touch My Katamari	216	83%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	80%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	83%
Unit 13	216	67%
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
WipEout 2048	215	87%

## PS STORE LISTING



1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
<b>After Burner Climax</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>91%</b>
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
All Zombies Must Die!	214	64%
Army	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arc The Lad	215	79%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Atelier Merurui: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	35%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
The Baconing	210	72%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%



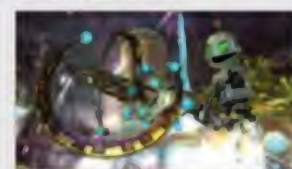
game	issue	score
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Bishi Bashi Special!	175	61%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
Blacklight: Tango Down	200	64%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Blast Factor	152	72%
Blokus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bomberman Ultra	185	82%
Braid	188	93%
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Call Of Duty Classic	188	90%
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Catan	195	85%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Comix Zone	210	62%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	16	79%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	168	70%
Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	175	31%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Counter-Strike: Global Offensive	223	89%
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	174	82%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	170	79%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Crazy Taxi	200	80%
Crescent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Cubix HD	207	76%
Dark Mist	164	53%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Destruction Derby	01	80%
.detuned	186	50%
Deus Ex	219	83%
Digger HD	186	52%
Diner Dash	190	66%
Driver	171	90%
Droplitz	184	91%
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome	169	85%
echochrome II	202	83%
Elefunk	170	45%
Euforia	212	85%
Explosion	203	70%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
Final Fantasy VII	181	96%
Final Fantasy VIII	190	90%
Final Fantasy IX	195	90%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
floW	151	90%
Flower	176	85%
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	55%
Frogger Returns	190	35%
From Dust	211	82%
Funky Lab Rat	201	70%
G-Police	27	84%
Galaxy Fight	215	27%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Geon	175	71%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
God Hand	216	83%
Gotham City Impostors	216	78%
Gran Turismo HD	150	75%
Gravity Crash	187	85%

game	issue	score
Greed Corp	191	75%
Greg Hastings Paintball 2	219	22%
GTI Club+	174	72%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
The House Of The Dead 4	218	82%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperball HD	188	70%
I Am Alive	217	64%
Infamous: Festival Of Blood	212	76%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Joe Danger	194	96%
Journey	216	87%
Judge Dredd	18	19%
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Jurassic Park: The Game	214	32%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Kula World	172	71%
Kung-Fu Live	201	42%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
The Last Guy	171	91%
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	151	79%
Limbo	209	90%
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Mad Riders	220	70%
Magic Carpet	179	65%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	84%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	70%
Marvel vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
Medal Of Honor: Frontline	210	52%
MediEvil	173	45%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Metal Gear Solid	187	93%
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Microbot	202	51%
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	94%
Motorhead	173	60%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto Shippuden: Kizuna Drive	205	42%
NBA Jam: On Fire Edition	212	64%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numbast	183	60%
N20	37	70%
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Pain	183	69%
Peggle	189	94%
Pinballistik	215	75%
PixelJunk 4am	220	40%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	77%
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puddle	216	76%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimension	208	81%

game	issue	score
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Quantum Conundrum	221	90%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Rainbow Moon	221	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Rayman 3 HD	217	77%
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	82%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Risk: Nations	202	80%
Rock Band Blitz	223	80%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Rocket Knight	194	74%
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	194	92%
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Scott Pilgrim vs The World	197	77%
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	92%
Section 8	193	78%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
The Simpsons: Arcade Game	216	54%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Skullgirls	218	88%
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic CD	214	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode I	199	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode II	220	40%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Snakeball	176	92%
Stacking	203	88%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syphon Filter	48	93%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tetris	202	84%
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles In Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tokyo Jungle	223	81%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	73%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Topolai: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Tumble	198	70%
Under Siege	207	71%
Uno	189	85%

## PS3'S BEST GAMES RATCHET & CLANK: A CRACK IN TIME 82%, PLAY186

It could have been so much worse: an established platformer series throwing in puzzle sections to bring something new and stop a formula that was beginning to get a little stale from ruining everyone's day. But *A Crack In Time* did it well.



Somehow, some way, somebody at Insomniac managed to set the wheels in motion for time-based puzzles that were so interesting and so clever that we actually complained there weren't enough of the brainteasers in the game. We don't do that often.



And of course, backing up these newly-added time-twisting puzzles was the traditional *Ratchet & Clank* platforming action and shooting. That stuff is established, fun and – importantly – offered a refreshing break from making your brain hurt with time puzzles.



It wasn't exceptional, it was held back by the now ten year old design tropes the series sticks with and it wouldn't convince non-believers of the *R&C* cause. But it's still one of the best games on PS3. Because we said so.



We don't know if the next *Ratchet & Clank* game is going to bring with it something like the time puzzles, and it would be a shame if it doesn't. Mainly because we still feel we didn't get enough of them in *A Crack In Time*.



## WOULD IT WORK ON PS3?



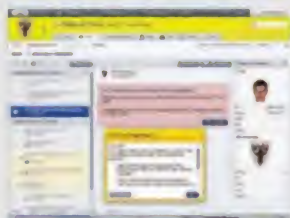
### GUILD WARS 2

The new big thing in the world of PC MMOs and – while massive and content-rich – simple enough that we wondered aloud if it would work on PS3. *DCUO* proves MMOs work on console, so *Guild Wars 2* is a game we could see functioning on PS3. But ArenaNet is unlikely to bother.



### MINECRAFT

Why this still hasn't come to PS3 we really aren't sure – it's out on pretty much everything else, including Xbox 360. All it could realistically be is an exclusivity deal with Microsoft. That, or Mojang and Notch hates PS3 so much they would deprive us of its building and destroying glory.



### FOOTBALL MANAGER

A fleeting appearance on console has given way to a more committed home on numerous handheld devices – including PSP. But could the most addictive game ever made make its way to PS3? And would it work? As a straight port of the PC version, no. As a straight port of the handheld version? No.



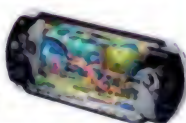
### DAYZ

The most popular mod in PC gaming of 2012, *DayZ* takes the ultra-realistic *Arma II* and turns it into zombie survival. Our very own Andy is obsessed with it, which is no mark of quality, but it seems like exactly the kind of game that would go down well on PS3, with a bit of a console-friendly UI tidy up.



game	issue	score
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	90%
The Walking Dead: Episode 1	219	89%
The Walking Dead: Episode 2	221	90%
The Walking Dead: Episode 3	223	86%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
WipEout	01	89%
WipEout HD	172	84%
Wizorb	222	78%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Wonder Boy In Monster Land	220	50%
Worms	179	91%
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Battle Islands	201	80%
Worms Crazy Golf	213	82%
Worms: Ultimate Mayhem	217	80%
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
Yars' Revenge	206	57%
Zack Zero	215	73%
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	213	69%
Zuma	182	78%

## PSP LISTING



The 3rd Birthday	203	80%
300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	145	45%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bomberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	94%
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
The Con	153	59%
Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
The Cube	153	64%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Dinoco: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy	203	79%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Everybody's Tennis	195	88%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
EyePet	199	77%
F1 2009	187	66%
Fate/Extra	219	60%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%

\*denotes import review

game	issue	score
FIFA 11	198	69%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%
Final Fantasy IV: The Complete Collection	204	80%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghost Recon Predator	200	60%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Ghostbusters: Sanctum Of Slime	204	51%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Gladiator Begins	206	52%
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
The Godfather: Mob Wars	136	66%
Gods Eater Burst	202	88%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%
God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta	199	79%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
GTA: Liberty City Stories	135	95%
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Hard Corps: Uprising	204	78%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman!		
What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	196	88%
The Legend Of Heroes: Trails In The Sky	214	75%
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	186	90%
LocoRoco	143	94%
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lord Of Arcana	202	65%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
MediEvil: Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	150	91%
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Might & Magic: Clash Of Heroes	205	84%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
Moon Diver	205	46%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Mytran Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
No Heroes Allowed	199	69%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patapon 3	205	81%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%
Persona 2: Innocent Sin	214	65%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%

game	issue	score
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoCrois	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ – Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%
Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Red Faction: Battlegrounds	205	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%
Ridge Racer	132	93%
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%
Sega Rally	158	90%
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable	206	78%
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
The Sims 2	137	71%
Slam Bolt Scrappers	204	73%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
SoulCalibur: Broken Destiny	183	92%
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
Split/Second: Velocity	200	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Swarm	204	78%
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	140	90%
Tekken 6	187	90%
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together	202	81%
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
UFC Undisputed 2010	197	80%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyria Chronicles 2	196	87%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	140	82%
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	161	70%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord!? 2	192	78%
WipEout Pulse	159	86%
WipEout Pure	138	93%
World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	141	67%
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	157	80%
WWE SmackDown! vs Raw 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! vs Raw 2007	147	80%
World Rally Championship	134	67%





IAN DRANSFIELD

WHAT (HAVE THEY BEEN PLAYING?)

**THE WALKING DEAD**

WHY (WAS IT CHOSEN?)

I was told it was "brilliant". It is brilliant

"THE ADVENTURE GAME is dead!" The Idiot cries, obvious opinions spilling out of his slackened maw onto his sweat and bile-encrusted cotton singlet. "I haven't played an adventure game in ages, meaning everything I say about the genre is totally true!" they add, before forgetting how to stay standing and ending up in a pile of their own moron juices on the floor.

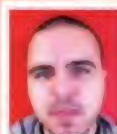
Ah, my poor Idiot – do you not see? For the way of light shows us, just as our holy father LucasArts once led the way, that there is always a place in the truest, purest of hearts for the genre still referred to as adventure. We won't argue with that moniker, at least not for now. Telltale has taken the torch passed down by the legendary heroes of yesteryear and – judging by *The Walking Dead* – broken into a monumental gallop with it. Rather than the usual 'ran with it'.

The comic book/TV show tie-in has some rough edges, lest we forget, and it won't appeal to all tastes (as if this does indeed matter). But that should not matter to you, unless you are The Idiot, in which case shut up and let us all get on with playing *The Walking Dead*. Because it's really rather brilliant. Shitty zombies!



# PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

What has the Play team been indulging in this month?



RYAN KING

WHAT (HAVE THEY BEEN PLAYING?)

**BORDERLANDS 2**

WHY (WAS IT CHOSEN?)

I am the heavenly nurse

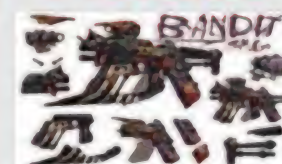
I HELP PEOPLE. That is my thing. Not because I'm a particularly helpful person in real-life, unless replying to questions with "dunno" while staring straight ahead counts as help. I'm talking about games. I was the Medic in *Brink*. I was the guy who dished out power in *DC Universe*. I was the Engineer who fixed your tank in *Battlefield 3*. To quote *Swingers*, the best movie ever made (behind *Commando*), I'm the guy behind the guy behind the guy.

In *Borderlands 2*, I'm now playing as the Siren. And by that, I mean I'm playing as the guy who unlocked the use-phaselock-on-fallen-player-to-res-them ability and now use it approximately seven times per second when playing with Ian (STOP BLOODY DYING IAN).

I've gone all-out healing. I've got the Heavenly Nurse class mod and I've got an eye-patch. I can kill enemies so they explode into life orbs that fly towards my injured team-mates. There isn't even a story behind this. I just thought I'd tell you all how bloody brilliant I am for being so selfless, mostly because I played *Borderlands 2* with Ian last night and healing him all the time is dull (STOP BLOODY DYING IAN), so this is a reaction to that. I AM BRILLIANT. WORSHIP ME.

That was awkward. I'm sorry. Won't happen again. Oh god I'm really embarrassed now. What was I thinking? That's it, I'm leaving *Play*. I can't stay on after this.

## PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LIKE...



Guns

PLAY: **BORDERLANDS 2**

We're using any excuse we can to talk about *Borderlands 2*. "It has lots of guns so if you like guns play *Borderlands 2*," for example. We're clever and witty like that – you never saw it coming.



Games we forgot existed

PLAY: **HOMEFRONT**

Seriously – no comments on its quality or lack thereof (apart from online), but who actually remembers *Homefront*? The former employees of Kaos have probably forgotten it exists, blending into the background as it always has.



Getting stuck halfway

PLAY: **SAVAGE MOON**

*Savage Moon* has a gentle introductory slope of difficulty that eases you into NOW YOU WILL DIE HA HA HA SUCKER. It's the Rollins Band *Liar* of games, luring you in with its soft-hearted approach before ripping your mind out and burning your soul.



Hating the new *Total Recall* film because it's rubbish

PLAY: **RED FACTION: GUERRILLA**

Oh god the new *Total Recall* film is total ass, isn't it? Pointless waste of style over substance time. Go back to something that reminds us of the good original, but in game form, and play *Guerrilla*. SMASHY OSTRICH HAMMER TIME.



Glamourising organised crime

PLAY: **YAKUZA 4**

The *Yakuza* series, much as we love it, does make us a little uncomfortable. It's no big leap to say the *Yakuza* isn't exactly the nicest organisation in the world, but the games would have you believe otherwise.





# ASSASSIN'S CREED: REVELATIONS



## WHAT WE SAID

**PLAY 212**  
"It speaks volumes that the new mechanics aren't a patch on the old. Just as Ubisoft has seen fit to draw Ezio's story to a close and opt to focus on new beginnings, it must do the same with the template that's age and flaws are becoming more and more obvious."

**75%**  
**80**  
out of 100  
metacritic

## WHAT OTHERS SAID

WAS ASSASSIN'S CREED: REVELATIONS A REVELATION (HA!) FOR YOU? OR HAD IT BECOME TOO MUCH, TOO SOON, TOO SIMILAR?



**TREV NORMAN** Played it, loved it, can't wait for part trois!

**ROBERT MILES** It was OK but it just seemed more like DLC to me. I will get the next one only cause I already got the previous 100000000000 instalments... baa baa

**ANDY EASTON** If I'm honest it was ok, i got a little tired of it after a while on the campaign. I actually enjoyed the MP more. Still Platinum'd it though!

**ALEX MARTYN** FPS section in AC I don't think so!

**JAMES BROWN** Well I've not long ago finished it, and I got it on release, so that says everything!

**ALICE HARE** Loved the campaign, but it felt a little rushed playing it :) still maintaining my love for Assassin's Creed though!

**TOM MCSHANE** Assassin's Creed 2.75 sums it up perfectly. Revelations was akin to having a wonderfully passionate night with a beautiful lady, only to have let out the loudest and wettest fart when you finished.



**@CAPTAINUG** Nice change of pace with a older ezio and the flashbacks were great but the city was very bland and the ziplines mainly useless

**@PAST\_THE\_PIXELS** Really enjoyed it, felt the bombs added some much needed variety in approaching enemies. More cerebral game all round. As always though I wish it was just set in that time period. The back to the future stuff inevitably feels jarring.

**@ALEX\_MMORALES** Right: bomb crafting wrong: tower defense. It is a good escape from the italian scenarios. ohh Old Ezio #BOSS.

**@ABLUFLYINGCAR** Hookblade = good. Desmond puzzle things = BAD.

**@DASHBOXER** Loved the bombs and esp the snag the tower and install a master assassin. Hated tower defence and the rubbish Desmond levels

**@XXCHRONOSXX** Story was amazing and conclusion of Ezio's life was really well done but some puzzles were really not needed.

**@MACTINGZ** The hookblade was decent but it didn't change enough from AC:Brotherhood.



## Post-Mortem

■ The last game in the Ezio trilogy brought back Altair and threw in new mechanics that felt like nothing more than filler, working its way into the Oxford English Dictionary as the definition of 'feature creep'. We're not sure if that's actually in the dictionary, what with it being a term and not a word. Anyway.

*Revelations* saw the tipping point – where *Brotherhood* had been praised for bringing in multiplayer, but otherwise staying pretty much the same as *ACII*, *Revelations* just felt like the same thing again. Again. First-person *Tetris*? No thanks. Tower defence? Stop it. Bomb-making? You're just being silly now. Not only did reviewers react accordingly: fans did too.

Sales were still huge – the sorts of numbers most publishers dream of – but they were down on what had come before. So were the scores. And the fans noticed. And the fans weren't as impressed. And the fans worried for the next game in the series, convinced it would make for more of the (more of the) same.

Then *Assassin's Creed III* made its presence known and most of our fears melted away. It's almost as if *Revelations* was indeed filler, just as we always thought it was. Ah well.



PLAY

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Gaming For Over A Decade

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CREED III**

Ubisoft's long-awaited  
revolutionary sequel reviewed

**BLACK OPS II**

Call Of Duty heads into the future  
as we rate Treyarch's newest FPS

**METAL GEAR RISING**

Hands-on with Platinum's incredible-looking  
Raiden slasher spin-off

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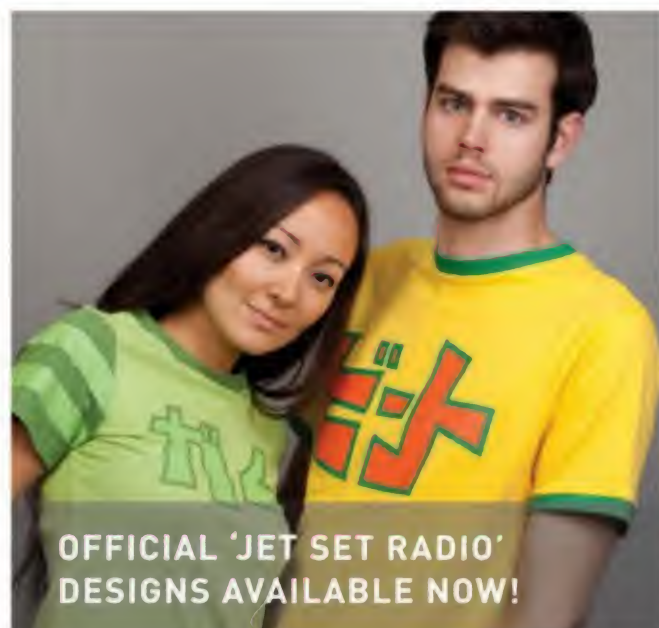




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